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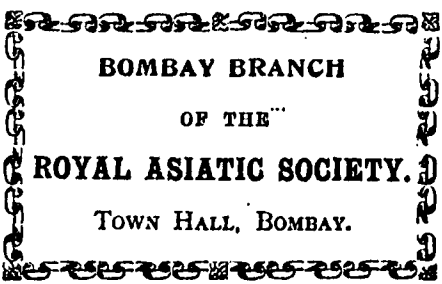

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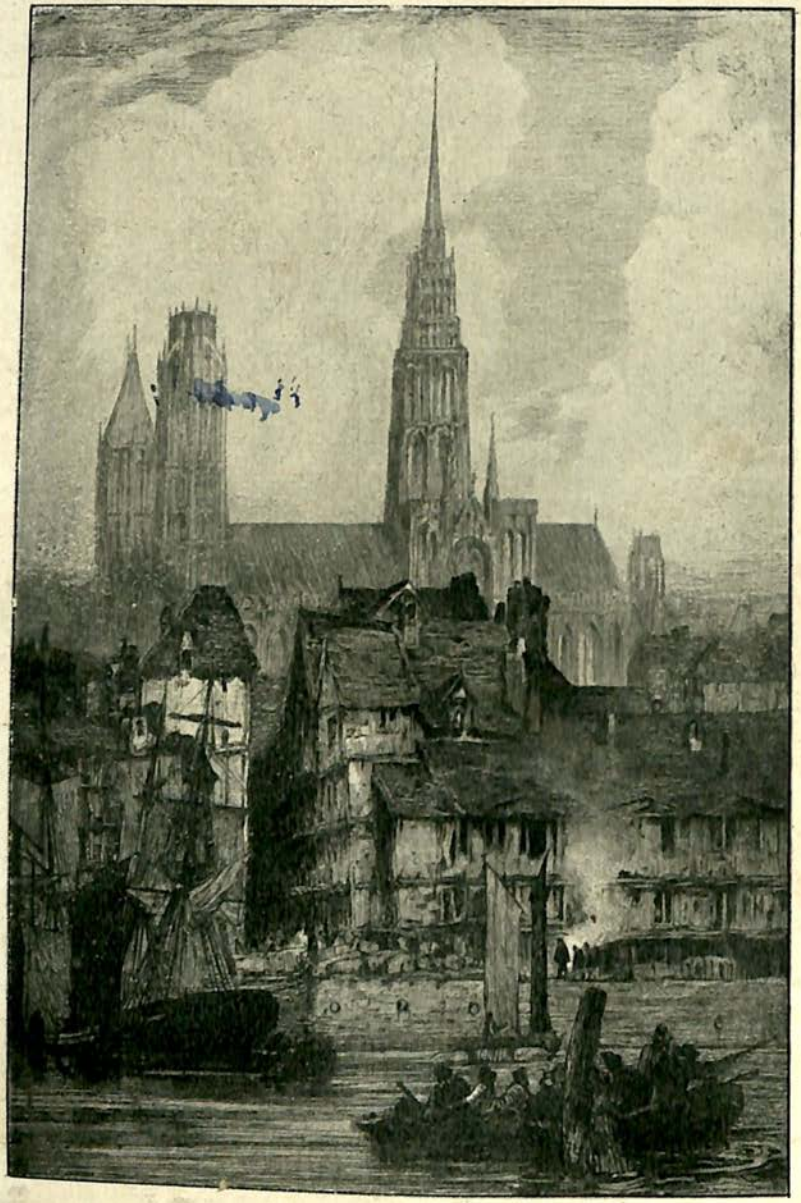
THE EARLIER ENGLISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS



ROUEN. *By R. P. Bonnington.*

THE

EARLIER ENGLISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS

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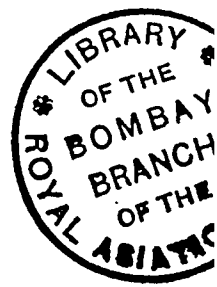

SECOND EDITION

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PREFACE TO THE SECOND EDITION

SINCE these pages were written the *prestige* of the Earlier English Painters in Water-Colours has certainly not diminished. On the contrary, their claims as the founders of a truly National School of Art, peculiarly English in both feeling and method, distinguished by its sincerity and beauty, have been more widely recognised than ever. There is scarcely a Public Art Gallery in Great Britain which does not contain specimens of their skill, and in the most important cities like Liverpool and Birmingham valuable and important collections have been formed. At Manchester, thanks to the generosity of Mr. J. E. Taylor and others, a specially fine

assemblage of early works has been presented to the Whitworth Institute, which now affords almost unequalled opportunities for studying the drawings of Girtin and of Turner during Girtin's life. It is to be noted also that the Royal Academy in some recent Winter Exhibitions have at last allowed the title of such men as Cox and De Wint to rank among the Deceased Masters of the British School, and that the Corporation of London have gathered fine examples for exhibition on the walls of the gallery at Guildhall. It is to be regretted that the large and interesting collection of Dr. Percy should have been dispersed at his death, but many of his drawings have already found their way into public institutions. The Collection at South Kensington has been increased from many sources, and greatly strengthened by the loan from the National Gallery of the fine drawings (principally by De Wint and George Cattermole) which were left to the nation by the late Mr. John Henderson.

The present volume covers the history of the Water-Colour School of England from its birth in the eighteenth to its maturity in the first half of the nineteenth century. Richer and more powerful pigments, the free use of body-colour, and changes of fashion and view (common to all branches of art) have done something to alter the character of English water-colour painting and to extend its scope. But, after all, the traditions remain from David Cox to Tom Collier, from Turner to Alfred Hunt, from Copley Fielding to H. G. Hine, from Cattermole to Sir J. D. Linton.

There is indeed a new school based not at all on English traditions, but rather on the example of the French and the Dutch. It has done much brilliant and beautiful work. It is perhaps the school of the future, but it is yet too young for the historian.

I have often wished to extend this study to later times, but my scant leisure has been fully occupied; and I have felt much less inclination

to make the attempt since Mr. J. P. Roget's very able and exhaustive 'History of the "Old Water-Colour" Society' has shown how formidable such a task would be.

COSMO MONKHOUSE.

August 13, 1896.

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THE EARLIER ENGLISH WATER-COLOUR PAINTERS.

I.

THE SANDBYS.

PAUL SANDBY has often been called 'The Father of the Water-colour School,' and the title is a good deal more appropriate than such titles are apt to be. At the time he began to paint there was certainly no such thing as a water-colour school, and he cultivated the art with great assiduity, as he did everything he undertook. Nevertheless, there were water-colour drawings in England long before his day, and water-colour landscapes also. In the use of transparent washes a high degree of skill had been reached, espe-

cially by architectural and military draughtsmen; a certain skill in drawing in sepia and neutral tints was a common accomplishment of the educated classes. George III. had had his lessons from Kirby, and the Prince of Wales from Alexander Cozens. Moreover, though the latter painter did not settle in England till 1746, he was then a trained artist in water-colours, as far as the accomplishment of the day went, and therefore it is evident that the method of landscape-painting in water-colours, which had been practised by Dutch and Flemish artists in the seventeenth century, was by no means confined to England in Sandby's youth. That a wide range of very pure and bright transparent colours was attainable even in the reign of Charles II. is evident from the brilliant and delicately executed flower-pieces of Verelst, and of the masterly use of body colour by English portrait-painters 'in little' from the days of Queen Elizabeth to those with which

we are now concerned, there is no doubt. If, indeed, it were a mere question of the employment of water as the vehicle of pigments, we should not stop even when we had got to the miniaturists of the Middle Ages or the frescoes of ancient Rome, but should have to go back to Egypt and the Pharaohs; but it is of the water-colour school of England only that I propose to treat, and more especially of that great development of water-colour landscape art at the end of the last century and the beginning of this, which, rightly considered, is the most original and national of all art movements in England. I therefore begin with Paul Sandby.

Although we may claim a very distinct individuality in other branches of painting, especially in portrait and *genre*, in landscape we may claim to have founded an entirely new school, new in sentiment, new in colour, new in method, presenting the appearance of nature far more fully and truly than any before. It was by the

early artists in water-colour that the foundation of this school was mainly laid; and it may be remarked, in passing, that some of the finest of these water-colour painters, such as Turner, Cox, De Wint, Bonington, Cotman, Holland, and Müller, were also among the finest of our painters in oil. As before said, there were water-colour painters in England before the Sandbys, and no doubt, in the formation of Paul's style and knowledge, his precursors, like George Lambert,[1] Samuel Scott, Brooking, Zuccarelli, and others, had their part; but perhaps the artist who could most justly challenge Paul Sandby's claim to the title of the father of the English school of water-colours in the production of faithful landscape, is William Tavener or Taverner (1703–1772), an amateur, not unknown to Dr. Smollett, who praises his drawings in 'Humphrey Clinker.'[2] It is generally stated that his works were princi-

[1] Scene painter at Covent Garden, and founder of the Beef Steak Club.

[2] See 'Humphrey Clinker,' vol. i. Letter to Dr. Lewis dated May 19.

MARKET WOMEN WITH CATTLE, *By Zuccarelli.*

pally in body colours, imitating the Italian Masters, and there is a drawing of this character in the South Kensington Museum, and others elsewhere; but in the late Dr. Percy's collection was a view from Richmond Hill executed by this artist in transparent colours, an extensive and beautiful landscape.[1] In the same collection was also a view of a sandpit at Woolwich by Taverner in body-colour. Both of these once belonged to Paul Sandby, and the latter might easily be mistaken for his work.

At all events, Paul Sandby was not without models, or good models, of water-colour drawings in the old fashion, and both he and his brother must have been well trained in the use of line and wash. From whom they got their first instruction in drawing there is no record, but the place where they got it was Nottingham, where they were born—Thomas in 1721 and Paul in 1725. Thomas is said 'to have been

[1] Now in the Whitworth Institute at Manchester, to which it was presented by Mr. J. E. Taylor.

attracted to the pursuit of architecture by the approbation bestowed upon a drawing of his native town, made by him as a self-taught artist upon a system of perspective which he had discovered and carried to great perfection.' This drawing was an *East Prospect of Nottingham, taken from Sneinton Hill*, afterwards engraved with other drawings by him, and published in Deering's 'History of Nottingham.' The date of it was 1741, when he was twenty years old, and his brother Paul sixteen, and in this year they both (by the help, it is said, of their borough member) entered the drawing school at the Tower of London.[1] According to the memoirs of James Gandon the architect (Dublin, 1846), they had previously kept an academy at Nottingham. Their talents must have been soon appreciated after their arrival in London, for in 1743 Thomas was appointed draughtsman and private secretary to the Duke of Cumberland, and in 1746–51 Paul

[1] This appears to have been the headquarters of the Old Map and Survey Office of the Master-General of the Ordnance.

was engaged as draughtsman in the survey of the Highlands. It was the fortune of Thomas to be the first to convey to the Government the intelligence of the landing of the Pretender in 1745. He was present at the battle of Culloden, and made sketches of the field of battle and of the camp, which are now in the possession of Her Majesty.[1] He accompanied the Duke to the Low Countries (1743–8), and in 1746 was made Deputy Ranger of Windsor Great Park, an appointment which he held till his death in 1798. The construction of Virginia Water was the most noticeable achievement of his Deputy Rangership of fifty-two years, and he did not fail to record its beauties in drawings in water-colour, eight of which were engraved (some by his brother Paul) and published in 1754. Both the brothers joined the Incorporated Society of Artists, and both were foundation members

[1] For particulars of other early drawings by Thomas and Paul Sandby, see 'Thomas and Paul Sandby: their Lives and Works,' by William Sandby. (Seeley and Co.)

of the Royal Academy, of which Thomas was also the first Professor of Architecture. His career as an architect scarcely concerns us except for the beauty of his architectural drawings (of Old London and from his own designs), which can be studied at the British Museum and the Soane Museum. It has been asserted that Thomas possessed more spirit and artistic feeling than his brother, and though this will not be admitted by those who have studied the range and variety of Paul's work, there can be no doubt that in architectural drawing, in precise draughtsmanship, and the skill of laying even and finely gradated tints of colour, it would be difficult for any artist to greatly excel Thomas. His figures also were carefully drawn and well introduced, and in a view of *The Lodge, Windsor Great Park* (engraved), some deer, ostriches, and horses are drawn with great truth and spirit, and the trees show careful study from nature. He also had no little skill in rendering atmospheric effect. This is well seen in a little view of *Covent*

Garden, from the east corner of the Piazza, in which the sunshine is warm and clear, the shadows transparent, and the square with its church and houses melts away in the distance. Mr. William Sandby [1] has numerous sketches of waggons and guns drawn by Thomas with great accuracy, and also a rowing boat, which is a marvel of exactitude. He has also this drawing of the Piazza, and some other architectural drawings, including a beautiful interior of Freemasons' Hall (since partly burnt down), which was perhaps his most important work as an architect.

On the whole, however, these drawings show the draughtsman rather than the pictorial artist; or the draughtsman whose tendencies to be a painter only show themselves as it were accidentally here and there. With Paul, however, it was quite different. His profession was not that of an architect, but a painter—a 'draughts-

[1] The last descendant of the Sandbys who bears the family name.

man' who, from dry record of fact, proceeded to pure art, who began by embellishing his drawings of architecture with effects of light and air, and ended by turning topography into landscape. Nor was he only a landscape-painter. Even during his early employment as draughtsman to the Survey in the Highlands, he made numerous sketches, not only of scenery, but figures, which he drew in after-life with grace, freedom, character, and humour. His portraits (always small) in chalk and water-colour, done for his own pleasure only, have often the grace and simplicity of Gainsborough. Mr. W. Sandby has several of these portraits of Paul's family and friends; his wife, Mrs. Mercier and her son, Lady Salisbury and Miss Evans, Lady Maynard, Lady Betty Harcourt and her husband, Mrs. Cosway, and others. It was his custom to introduce portrait groups into the foreground of his drawings, where we may see the portly Captain Grose on the terrace at Windsor, the architect Gandon and his wife before Montagu House, and

(it is said by some and doubted by others) Dr. Johnson and Mrs. Thrale in Hyde Park. He was greatly interested, also, in technical experiments. He, like other artists of his day, had to manufacture his own colours, both transparent and opaque, and such works of his as have been well kept attest by their perfect preservation and power (especially those in body-colour) his skill and knowledge in this matter. In engraving, especially in aquatint, he was an adept. He is said to have been the first to introduce aquatint into England, and he certainly practised it with remarkable skill. It was a process admirably adapted to reproduce the water-colours of the period. It could imitate to perfection the monochrome line and wash; and as this then formed the foundation of all colour drawings, the aquatints had only to be coloured by a skilful hand to appear as *facsimiles* of the original. Many hundreds, probably, of such tinted aquatints have been sold as water-colour drawings, and in his method of teaching, afterwards described, he laid

even a more dangerous trap for careless or ignorant collectors.

Except that he resided with his brother for some time at Windsor, and that Sir Joseph Banks bought a large number of his drawings of the Castle and town, and that he made several tours in Wales with this patron and the Hon. Charles Greville, we know little of his means of livelihood before the year 1769, when he was appointed Chief Drawing Master of the Royal Military Academy at Woolwich. Here, as probably with many former pupils, his practice was to give the students an original drawing of his own to copy, providing them with an etching in outline of the subject. The trees, buildings, &c., were lined very finely, as with a very sharp pen, just as they were in the drawing itself, and the copies, when well executed (some were done by Sandby himself) are much more difficult to detect than the coloured aquatints. Paul Sandby was also the author of a few caricatures, but these can only be mentioned here as one of the

many manifestations of his versatile talents. Enough has been said to show that his aims were far more pictorial than those of his brother.

Though his business, apart from teaching, lay probably most in the way of architectural and topographical drawing, his tendency was always to make a picture, choosing the view which composed most happily, embellishing it with accidents of light—venturing even on a sunset now and then, and always enlivening the scene with figures. These were the sort of drawings for which there was perhaps most demand, and Paul Sandby was a man of such cheerful temperament, and so well-balanced a mind, that it is probable he enjoyed whatever kind of work he had in hand. Nevertheless, it is evident that the bent of his talent was towards landscape-painting, as a distinct fine art.

When Sandby was young there was really no national school of landscape-painting anywhere. What landscape art there was in the world was

traditional, and founded on the schools of the seventeenth century, principally the Franco-Italian school of Claude and the Poussins, with a dash of Salvator Rosa. The faithful school of the Dutch had little hold on the fashion. It was the scenic school which triumphed, if any can be said to have triumphed. The only great landscape-painter of England was Richard Wilson, and both he and his contemporary, George Smith, of Chichester, probably owed what fame they had to their Italian style. Ideals ruled art everywhere. In figure Michel-angelo and the Caracci, in landscape Claude and Poussin, shut out Nature. Notwithstanding a strong love of beauty in certain of its phases, and an enjoyment, genuine and widespread amongst the cultivated classes, for "scenery," the desire to express the local character of British landscape, and the power to express it, seem to have been absolutely wanting. The scenery of Scotland and Wales was probably greatly admired, and many artists or draughts-

men were employed to make records of it, but no one arose capable of presenting its special beauties in artistic language; and, for public and artists alike, English scenery had to be translated into Italian (and base semi-poetical Italian) before either one or the other was satisfied that the thing was a picture. It is the truest claim of Paul Sandby to be the father not only of English water-colour, but of English landscape, that he frequently took off these Italian spectacles.

But there were two sides to him, even as there were to Turner. There are few artists like Girtin, Gainsborough, and Hogarth, who can get rid at once of the dominant artistic influence of their time, and in the work which we may presume Paul Sandby did more especially for his own pleasure—work which was farthest away from topography — we generally find foreign and traditional influences strongly at work. He had an ideal landscape, Italian and scenic, with its stage trees in the foreground, its hill and

town in the middle distance, its sky flooding all with afternoon sunshine. But he also had as strong, if not a stronger, tendency towards naturalism, the faithful interpretation of the scenery of his own country. He evidently recognised two distinct classes of landscape—the classical landscape, founded on Italy and Claude and the laws of composition, the home and human landscape founded on the Dutchmen and personal observation. Somewhat in the relation of poetry and prose the two styles may have appeared to him, the one ideal, imaginative, aspiring to beauty, the other faithful, imitative, and bred of loving familiarity. That the latter style could ever become the more deeply poetical of the two he probably never thought, but he was fond of it, cultivated it, and made it grow for the first time in England.

But though we may roughly divide Sandby's purely landscape art into two such classes or styles, it would need a much more searching

CARMARTHEN CASTLE. *From a Drawing by Paul Sandby.*

analysis to do justice to the variety of his artistic talent and sympathy. Like Turner, though of course not to so wonderful an extent, he showed himself sensitive to a number of influences from divers painters, and capable of learning something from each. His Italian or Claudesque manner he adopted probably at second-hand, from Taverner, Zuccarelli, George Barret the elder, Wilson, and others. Of direct study from 'Old Masters' (French, Italian, or Dutch) there is little trace in his work, but he entered into the aims of many distinct individualities of his time. Wilson and he were friends, and many a hint of the older man thrown out in a few touches, Sandby would elaborate into a suggestion for a picture. Of his fellow feeling with Gainsborough, a distinct record exists in a number of sepia drawings in the possession of Mr. William Sandby, one of which is reproduced here; and, not to multiply instances, in his latest drawings it is evident that he was not too old to learn

something even from so young a genius as Girtin.

Altogether, Paul Sandby stands out as one of the most interesting and important, if not as one of the greatest, artists of the English school. There are few things that he could not do in a manner above the average; nothing, perhaps, which he did supremely well. He was thoroughly national, and very accomplished, with a range of artistic sympathy exceeded by few.

During his long and honourable life the influence which he exerted must have been very great. Through the latter half of the last century, and for some years in this, his genial, accomplished, vigorous personality was in constant contact with men in various classes of society, from the King down to his pupils, from the nobility to his brother artist, Dominic Serres, who lived next door to him. He knew William Hogarth and Richard Wilson, he outlived John Robert Cozens and Thomas Girtin; most of

the artists of whom these papers will treat were born within his lifetime (1725–1809); some of them were his pupils; none of them, not excluding the greatest, but owed much to his labours and his talents. Of his genial, prosperous, happy life certain of his drawings afford us a few glimpses. First we have a charming one of the studio belonging to his house in London (still existing as 23, Hyde Park Place), with its poplars carefully studied, and its curiously raised garden full of flowers and children; then we have a humorous sketch of Sir Francis Bourgeois and Mr. Desenfans, the founders of the Dulwich Gallery, snoring on their passage across the Channel, and we are reminded of the wit and humour of the man, to hear whose latest story the King would (it is said) break off more serious conversation with more distinguished individuals; and in that charming group of the daughters of Earl Waldegrave, Miss Keppel, and their companion, we see his love of children,

and his delight in their simplicity and freshness. We are also reminded that the three sisters, when of a larger growth, furnished the subject of one of the masterpieces of Sir Joshua Reynolds.

II.

JOHN ROBERT COZENS.

IF such a thing be ever attempted as a thoroughly exhaustive chronicle of the Water-colour Art of England and its innumerable professors, many names now hidden in obscurity will have to be mentioned, and many artists of some reputation will have to be treated at a greater length than in the present work. Then the skill of Charles Louis Clérisseau (1721–1820), that able and picturesque draughtsman of architecture and ruins, will have to be praised, although he was a Frenchman, if it be only to compare it with that of Robert Adam (1728–1792), the well-known Scotch architect and designer of ornament, with whom he sometime travelled and worked. Then more

than a passing allusion will have to be made to Samuel Scott (1710–1772), the friend of Hogarth, the painter of London and its river, 'the English Canaletti,' by whom there are some water-colours extant of much purity and delicacy of tint and tone. Then the clever Indian-ink sketches of shipping by C. Brooking (1723–1759), who obtained celebrity in his short life as a painter (in oils) of sea-pieces[1] and the tinted drawings (marine and landscape) of his pupil, Dominic Serres, R.A. (1722–1793), marine painter to George III., poor though they be, will undergo analysis.[2] Nor should a niche in such a work be denied to the Rev. W. Gilpin, the author of 'Forest Scenery' (1723–1804) who loved to draw his monochrome landscapes on a paper warmly tinted with reddish yellow;

[1] One of them has recently been added to the National Gallery.

[2] Dominic Serres was a Frenchman, and was master of a Spanish vessel when he was taken prisoner during the war of 1752 and brought to England. There are several of his sea-pieces at Greenwich Hospital and Hampton Court Palace.

still less to his brother, Sawrey Gilpin, R.A. (1733–1807), the pupil of Samuel Scott, and famous as a painter of animals. These men were all contemporaries of Sandby, and most of them about the same age as he; but they did not seriously influence the process of water-colour or the art of landscape, and must give room now to more important men.

Among these was George Barret, R.A. (1728 or 1732–1784), who, though his reputation has now dwindled to small dimensions, was the most successful landscape-painter of his day, and made his thousands while Wilson was starving. His manner was effective and new, marked by its decisive drawing and fresh if not very profound study of nature. He was the son of a clothier of Dublin, was apprenticed to a staymaker, and began his career as an artist by colouring prints. He, like Barry, owed much to the encouragement of Burke, who introduced him to the Earl of Powerscourt, in whose beautiful park he used to sketch. After gaining a pre-

mium of £50 from the Dublin Society for the best landscape, he came to England in 1762, and carried off the first premium of the Society of Arts two years later. His success was extraordinary, and his pictures sold for prices never given for landscapes before. Lord Dalkeith paid £1,500 for three of them, and for Mr. Lock he decorated a whole room at Norbury Park with landscapes. But his success was achieved as a painter in oils, and his interest from the present point of view consists mainly in the impulse he gave to the taste for natural scenery, in his employment of water-colour for picturesque views of 'the country;' and, perhaps more than all, in the fact that he was the father of George Barret, junior, one of the greatest of English painters in water-colour.

Two other artists deserve mention for their influence on landscape art generally, rather than as water-colour painters. These are Thomas Gainsborough and Philip James De Loutherbourg, both Royal Academicians. The latter

(1740–1812), the son of a Pole and born at Strasburg, was elected a member of the French Academy at the age of twenty-two—thirty being the prescribed age—and some years after came to England, and was engaged by Garrick as his scene-painter. Though not a great colourist, nor a great genius, he was a sound painter, and there was a vigour in his storms and battle-pieces, and a boldness of composition in his landscapes and seascapes, that made his individuality felt in spite of the conventions on which his art was based. Thomas Gainsborough (1727–1788), on the other hand, introduced an original element into landscape art. Though the Dutchmen were his first models, he soon broke away to nature in a style and with a sentiment entirely personal. He may be said to have been the first to paint English country in its relation to English country life—the first Englishman to express the beauty of familiar scenes, and to be inspired by the homely love of locality. His was the beginning in England of that

modern art of landscape which differs from that of former times, in that it regards earth as the scene of man's existence rather than the stage of his imagination, and treats the phenomena of nature, sweet or awful, with reference to their effect on the fortunes and passions of the individual, rather than on the destinies of the human race. His own art was not highly charged with emotion, but what there was was personal. He painted what he saw as it was reflected in his mind, which transformed all things to elegance, and imbued them with a pure and tender sentiment.

Gainsborough's water-colours were mainly confined to bold sketches in monochrome, and those of more varied tint are but pale things, but his effect was great upon landscape art in England, whether in oil or water. We have seen how Sandby essayed his style, we can trace it in the drawings of Girtin and Turner. But it was not only in landscape that his potency was felt. He was the inventor of the elegant rustic; he created

a picturesque peasant and his family, admirably adapted to live in his picturesque cottage in his picturesque lanes, the first of a race which, sentimentalised by Wheatley and vulgarised by Morland, were long to inhabit the Arcadia of the English artist.

Altogether, by the time that John Robert Cozens (1752–1799, or a little later) appeared upon the scene, there were plenty of styles for a young English artist to follow. All the styles of all the foreign Schools had been more or less transplanted to England, but he—partly by the accidents of life, partly from the genius which was in him—struck into a new path; and while he added a fresh sentiment to landscape art, he developed at the same time the scope and practice of painting in water-colours. He developed its scope by proving its capacity to render subtle atmospheric effects not hitherto attempted, its practice by the dexterity with which he used his materials. His drawings are usually classed among drawings in tint, not drawings in colour;

but this distinction depends on what is meant by colour, and is often hard to draw. His earlier drawings have a ground of Indian ink, and the slight washes of colour afterwards added were very low in scale, only here and there exceeding what may be called a grey: grey, warm and cold; grey, blueish or greenish; grey, brownish or yellowish;—but he used all these tints with such dexterity, he blended and interlaced them with such variegation and in such sympathy with the full tones and tints of nature, that the eye, if not disturbed by a comparison with more highly-coloured works, wants little more to realise the natural appearance of the scene. Between the slightest tint and the fullest colour the gradations are infinite, and the progress of English water-colour was from monochrome through neutral tint to full colour. Cozens lived when the practice of first laying in the general light and shade of a drawing in neutral tint was in full force. This groundwork was sometimes the same throughout, but was often composed of three

tints: a brownish tint for the foreground, a blueish or greenish tint for middle distance, and a paler tint of the same for the distance. The tints varied with different artists. Cozens preferred a tint of medium warmth for the foreground, and greenish tints for the distances. Over this ground were laid light washes of brighter or stronger tints for local colour, sunlight, &c. Such a method as this in water-colour can never more than suggest Nature's true colours; and it may be said of Cozens that he expressed as much of Nature's appearance as was possible with the means. The new system introduced by Girtin and Turner of putting in objects at once in their true local colour did not come before the older system had been brought to perfection, and could go no farther. It may be even contended that truth of tone can never be attained so perfectly by the later system, and that in this, and perhaps some other respects, the drawings of Cozens have never been excelled. In our own time one of the most distinguished

of modern landscape-painters (Corot) deliberately sacrificed colour in order to render more completely those atmospheric effects in which he delighted, contenting himself with a restricted scale in order to obtain greater perfection within it. Moreover, in many of Cozens' later drawings there is, except in the foreground, nothing which can be called a ground-tint, and almost the whole of them, as, for instance, in two beautiful views of the coast of Sicily in the British Museum, is occupied by sky, sunlit slopes, and water, which have been put in at once upon the white paper in colour which, if not brilliant, is at least lively. If these are 'tinted' drawings it must be allowed that in Cozens' art tinting was brought to the very doors of colour, and if it is incorrect to describe him as a colourist, he showed at least the capacity to become one.

If we look for the master of John Robert Cozens it will be hard to find any one who answers that description. He cannot be said to have based his art on the Dutchmen or the

Frenchmen, nor, though his fame rests on drawings of Italian scenery, the Italians. Neither shall we find in his countrymen, in Wilson or Gainsborough, Taverner or Paul Sandby, any one who gave him the key to his interpretation of nature. The nearest affinity to his work to be discovered in that of his precursors is, perhaps, presented by the drawings of his father, Alexander Cozens, and here the likeness is in method and subject rather than in skill and sentiment.

Alexander Cozens, who died in 1786 at an unknown age, was one of two sons born to Peter the Great by an Englishwoman, whom he took back with him from Deptford to Russia. Of his early life we know nothing until he was sent by his father to study painting in Italy, whence he came to England in 1746. The forty years he spent in England were apparently prosperous. He soon obtained a position in both art and society, was drawing-master at Eton College, gave lessons to the Prince of

Wales, and numbered amongst his friends, patrons, and acquaintances, a large number of titled, wealthy, and otherwise illustrious persons. Nor does he appear to have been held in less esteem by artists and connoisseurs. He had taught Sir George Beaumont at Eton, and in the list of subscribers to his 'Principles of Beauty relative to the Human Head,' we find the names of Burke, Garrick, Flaxman, and Sir Joshua Reynolds. He married a sister of Robert Edge Pine,[1] an artist of some fame as a painter of history and portrait, and left one son, John Robert, the principal subject of this chapter.

If it had not been for this son he would scarcely have claimed more than a slight reference in connexion with the English water-colour school. Such drawings as I have seen of his of a date subsequent to his arrival in England are of no great merit; and a little sketch-book of skies, shown to me as once

[1] The friend of Hogarth, who painted him as the fat friar in his picture of 'Calais Gate,' now in the National Gallery.

belonging to him, proved that if he studied skies it was without much valuable result. His recorded method of teaching was peculiar. In the 'Reminiscences of Henry Angelo' (who was one of his pupils at Eton), it is thus described :—

'Cozens dashed out upon several pieces of paper a series of accidental smudges and blots in black, brown, and grey, which, being floated on, he impressed again upon other paper; and by the exercise of his fertile imagination, and a certain degree of ingenious coaxing, converted into romantic rocks, woods, towers, steeples, cottages, rivers, fields, and waterfalls. Blue and grey blots formed the mountains, clouds, and skies.'

An improvement on this plan was to splash the paint first upon the bottoms of earthenware plates instead of paper, and to stamp impressions therefrom on sheets of damp paper. This method of instruction he described in a pamphlet called 'A New Method of assisting the Invention in Drawing Original Loose Positions in Landscape.' That accident may help invention was no new theory (Leonardo da Vinci recommends

the stains on a plaster wall as aids to landscape design), and it would, of course, be unjust to Alexander Cozens to regard this as the sum and substance of his teaching. That he studied nature and taught his pupils to do so, may be divined from another work of his, called 'The Shape, Skeleton, and Foliage of Thirty-two Species of Trees' (1771, reprinted 1786). The ambition to distinguish one tree from another, to say nothing of thirty-two varieties, was not common to all artists in those days.

Luckily we have better means of judging of Alexander Cozens' skill as an artist, and capacity as a teacher, than the recollections of an Angelo or an Edwards.[1] The British Museum contains fifty-four early drawings by him which have a curious history. They were lost by the artist in Germany, on his way from Rome to England, in 1746, and were recovered in Florence thirty years afterwards by his son. I may, perhaps,

[1] See account of Alexander Cozens in 'Anecdotes of Painters,' by Edward Edwards.

quote a short description of them which I have given elsewhere.

'They show him as a highly skilled draughtsman in the style of the time, with much sense of scenic elegance in composition. Some are wholly in pen and ink in the manner of line-engravings. Others show extensive landscapes, elaborately drawn in pencil, and partly finished in ink. Others are washed in monochrome, and some in colour of a timid kind. One, a view of Port Longano, in the Isle of Elba, is very prettily tinted. In most there is no sky to speak of, but in one he has attempted a bold effect of sunlight streaming through cloud, and brightly illuminating several distinct spots in the landscape.[1] Several broad pencil drawings on greenish paper, heightened with white, are very effective. Altogether, these show that Cozens, before his arrival in England, was a well-trained artist who observed nature for himself, and was not without poetical feeling.'

[1] An effort afterwards attempted with greater success by his son.

All things considered, we need not go much further than Alexander Cozens to look for an explanation of his son John Robert. The father had imagination, ingenuity, trained skill, and these, with that something else which is undefinable, were sufficient to make that other undefinable quality—genius. If the capacity for hard work (as Turner thought) was the requisite, Cozens the younger must have had it. Leslie mentions 'a very small pen-drawing of three figures, on which is written, "Done by J. Cozens, 1761, when nine years old."' In 1767 he began to exhibit at the Incorporated Society of British Artists. He was then only fifteen years old, and at the age of twenty-four we find him sufficiently advanced in skill to be taken by Mr. Robert Payne Knight, the archaeologist and art-collector, to Switzerland, to make sketches of the scenery. The result, or part of the result, of this his first visit to the Continent, is contained in over fifty drawings, once in the Townley Collection. This

collection, which at the date when this was written was in the possession of the late Hon. R. Allanson-Winn, is specially interesting in connexion with Turner, as the drawings cover much the same ground as those of Turner's first visit to Switzerland, and there is good reason to suppose that Turner saw these drawings of Cozens', and copied at least one of them.[1] Moreover, it was in Cozens' first year of absence (1776) that he sent from Italy his solitary contribution to the exhibition of the Royal Academy, called *A Landscape with Hannibal, in his March over the Alps, showing his Army the Fertile Plains of Italy.* Where is this drawing (or picture) now? It must have been in existence many years after it was painted, for Turner (born 1775) saw it and spoke of it as a work from which he learned more than from anything he had seen before, and in 1812 *he* also exhibited a picture of *Hannibal and his Army crossing the Alps.*

[1] See page 102.

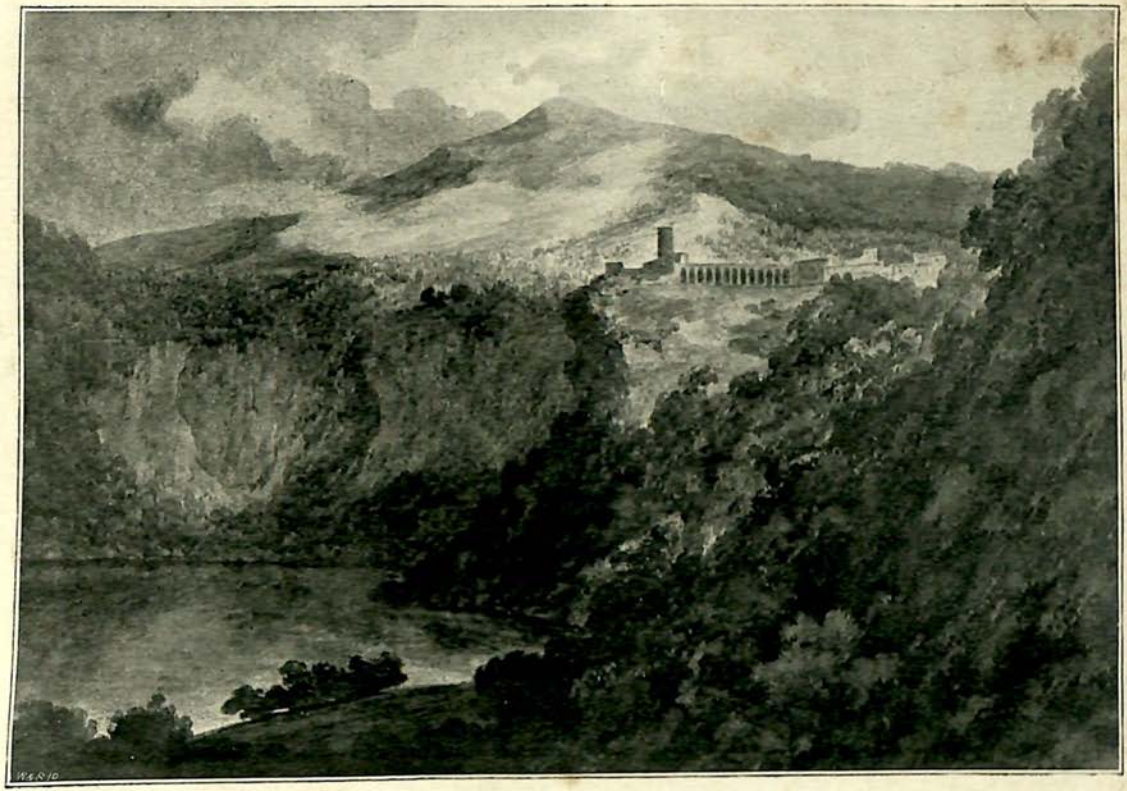
These drawings of 1776 are remarkable in the history not only of English water-colour painting and English art, but in the history of landscape-painting of all time. They are the first successful attempt to give a true impression of Alpine scenery. From the first Cozens seems to have found his way to render its character, to convey the grandeur of its snow-crowned peaks, the depth of its valleys, the solitude of its lakes, the appearance of its slopes, 'fledged,' as Shelley sang, 'with pines,' the sun striking through the gorges on high-perched cot or village, the chill of the shaded hollows filled with mist, the cloaks of cloud about the shoulders of the hills,—and all this not in a pretty conventional or a grand conventional manner, but with a style that was Nature's own. His drawings show no sense of effort; his powers seem to have risen spontaneously to each occasion; the prime difficulty of scale and proportion in dealing with enormous altitudes and vast masses, of which but a small portion is seen, does not

seem to have troubled him. His mountains look their height, and suggest their bulk and weight.

Cozens is said to have visited Italy twice, and we may, perhaps, conclude that the first visit was in 1776, with Payne Knight, and that he returned to England in 1779, as that year is given as the date of his return in a memorandum accompanying the drawings by his father in the British Museum. We next hear of him in Italy in 1782, in company with Mr. William Beckford,[1] for whom he executed a large number of water-colour drawings. Probably this was his second visit, from which he returned in 1783. Most of these (nearly a hundred) were sold at Christie's in 1805. They, and other drawings, show that his travels in Italy were extensive—Padua, Pæstum, Verona, Venice, Rome, Naples, Sicily, Elba, were among the places visited. Some of his grandest drawings are of Rome and its neighbourhood, and

[1] The author of 'Vathek.'

the neighbourhood of Naples. It is on his Italian drawings that his fame chiefly rests. Some of them are of large size, like that of *Castle Gandolfo on Lake Albano*, which is reproduced here as a good example of his more grandiose subjects, and his treatment of complicated effects of light and shade. The original is one of three drawings of the same lake from different points of view, which are in the possession of Mr. George W. H. Girtin, a grandson of the artist. It is rather a dark drawing, most of it being in shade and half shade, and much of the hills being clothed with trees; but no part of it is impervious to light, the deepest shade is illuminated, and the gradation of tones and tints in a scale of browns and greens and purples, from the comparatively cold dark of the bosky foreground to the chill half shade of the cliff on the opposite side of the lake, and through the warm semi-illuminated hollow to the sunlit village on the top of it, is subtle and exquisite. The South Kensington Museum possesses six



THE CASTLE OF GANDOLFO. *By J. R. Cozens.*

examples of the artist's work, and the late Mr. Henderson left a fine collection of Cozens' drawings to the British Museum, so that there is no difficulty in studying an artist of whom Constable[1] said that 'he was the greatest genius that ever touched landscape.' Constable also said that he was 'all poetry,' and Leslie wrote of him with scarcely less enthusiasm. In what his 'poetry' consisted, and how it differed from that of previous artists, still remain for consideration. Sad to say, the career of this singularly endowed artist was cut short by insanity. From 1794 to his death he was under the charge of Dr. Monro, whose name will often appear in these papers as the great encourager of young water-colour artists at the end of the

[1] Although Constable was essentially a painter in oil-colours, and therefore does not come within the scope of this book, it must not be forgotten that he used water-colours with great power for studies of sunshine and shower, such as he loved. Some of his sparkling and suggestive sketches are at the British Museum, and others on the staircase of the Diploma Gallery of the Royal Academy.

last century. He had another friend also, Sir George Beaumont, the pupil of his father, who supported him in these years of darkness.

III.

HEARNE, ROOKER, MALTON.

CONSTABLE'S opinion of Cozens, as repeated by Leslie, is perhaps open to the charge of hyperbole, but there is no doubt that, if not 'all poetry,' the quality termed 'poetry' was the distinguishing characteristic of his drawings, and separates them from those of any other 'draughtsman' of his time.

The term 'poetry' is always difficult to define, and never more so than when used in connexion with landscape. It will I think be sufficient to think of it as a quality which in some way induces feeling in the beholder. The landscapes of Titian, of Claude, the Poussins, and Salvator Rosa, are poetical; they impress the beholder

with a distinct emotion. The landscapes of the artists of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries were not intended to do so as a rule. They were mere backgrounds not disturbing the sentiment of the figures, at most illustrating the story, unless the scene depicted required some landscape help, as *St. Jerome in the Wilderness*, which demanded 'horrid' rocks, or the *Adoration of the Magi*, which required a distant view showing the retainers of the Eastern magnates defiling through passes or winding through streets. In such cases landscapes were accessories to the sentiment of the figures. This accessory quality gradually became more sympathetic and dramatic, and reached its highest pitch as such in the landscapes of Titian. Landscape then gradually increased its power over the figures until these became quite subordinate in the art of Claude. So the old landscape grew and became a thing of poetry, but of poetry which was manufactured out of landscape to suit a literary sentiment.

Cozens' poetry differed completely from this. It was not the emotion that dictated the scene, but the scene actually beheld that dictated the emotion. It was a personal subjective emotion, the direct impression of Nature upon the artist. As Pope was to Wordsworth, so was Claude to Cozens. Therefore Cozens was not only an initiator in the matter of *technique*, finding in the slender resources of a few poor water-colours means to express many effects of nature hitherto unattempted, but he also contributed a new poetical element to landscape art.

Between Cozens and Girtin no one of the first rank in the history of English school of water-colour can be named, but Cozens was not the only founder of the school, and his 'poetry' was not the most potent force in its formation. It grew from humbler seed. As with Paul Sandby, so with the whole school, the growth was from 'topography' to art. The topographer, the producer of the 'tinted' drawings, the precursor of Turner—Turner himself in his earlier years—

was not called an artist or a painter, but a 'draughtsman,' and the draughtsman held much the same position and existed for much the same purpose as the photographer of the present day. He was not expected to produce a work of art, but a more or less faithful record of places, and buildings, and 'Views.' He was not greatly considered, perhaps, nor paid very highly, but he was in much requisition. There was a constant sale for engravings of 'Views.' The great Alderman Boydell had laid the foundation of his fortune by 'Views' in England and Wales, drawn by himself with little skill, and engraved by himself with little more. Views of castles and abbeys, of watering-places, and the scenery of Wales and the North, were popular in those days. They were days of the revival of classical taste in architecture, of large mansions in town and country, built by noblemen and gentry, of landscape-gardening with artificial lakes and Grecian temples; and the skill of the architect, the pride of the proprietor and the

curiosity of the public, found employment for the draughtsman or pictorial recorder of such notable works. They were the days, moreover, of 'antiquities' and local histories, of researches by the Groses and the Whitakers at home, of the diggings of the Athenian Stuarts and Gavin Hamiltons abroad. Altogether there were many directions in which the draughtsman might hope for employment. If he were of a roving turn, with a taste for adventure, he might accompany a voyage of discovery—like A. W. Devis (1763–1822), who as draughtsman in the employ of the East India Company was wrecked in the Pellew Islands; or like John Webber, R.A. (1752–1793), who accompanied Captain Cook on his last voyage and drew the scene of his death, of which he was an eye-witness; or like William Alexander (1767–1816), who accompanied Lord Macartney's embassy to China in 1792, and made a number of delightful drawings of China and the Chinese, full of vivacious and well-drawn figures, which are now deservedly prized

by connoisseurs. At home, or on the Continent, the architects and the antiquarians, the patrons of art and the *dilettanti*, furnished a good deal of employment. We have seen Cozens travelling with William Beckford and Payne Knight in Switzerland and Italy; so William Pars, A.R.A. (1742–1782), accompanied Dr. Chandler to Greece and Lord Palmerston to Switzerland and Rome, and John Smith (1749–1831) earned his soubriquet of 'Warwick Smith' from his travels with Lord Warwick in Italy; and many other instances might be mentioned of 'draughtsmen' similarly engaged abroad. But it was principally in England, especially in the last quarter of the eighteenth century, that these topographical artists, going from place to place drawing Roman remains and Gothic brasses, churches and cathedrals, castles and abbeys, gentlemen's 'seats' and famous 'views,' acquired the knowledge of nature and the skill which formed the basis of the earlier English school of water-colour painting.

Sometimes they went, like Moses Griffith (born 1749, living 1809), in the service of an antiquary like Pennant; sometimes like the Swiss, Samuel Hieronymus Grimm (1734–1794), on the commission of a gentleman of taste like Sir R. Kaye; sometimes engaged by or in partnership with the publishers of illustrated works on architecture, topography, and archaeology, like Thomas Hearne (1744–1817), and many others, including Turner and Girtin: but the training and the result of it was the same in all cases. It was prosework—at least in intention—this work of the draughtsman, and its main subject was architecture. And it is because the art of Cozens was from its peculiarly poetical character raised above the ordinary channel of progress, that I have treated him somewhat out of chronological order. This ordinary channel was one rather of business than pleasure—a canal rather than a river—and the vast majority of 'draughtsmen' had little poetry or genius, and would have had little scope for the exercise of either so long as they merely per-

formed the work that was required of them. Architects and architects' assistants swell the ranks of these early water-colourists; and it was not of pictorial beauty that such men as Clérisseau, William Reveley, Robert Adam, or Nicholas Revett, thought when they were sketching in China, Greece, or Italy, for themselves or each other, or for the Dilettanti Society.

It is true that the use of water-colour was not confined to 'draughtsmen;' it was used, of course, by the miniature-painters and some few figure-painters, and also by landscape-painters at the head of their profession. There was Joseph Farington, R.A., for instance (1747–1821), the pupil of Wilson, a great man at the Royal Academy, who drew landscapes in water-colour as well as painted them in oil. There were also painters of sporting subjects, like Philip Reinagle, also a Royal Academician (1749–1833), and the fashionable teacher John Alexander Gresse (1741–1794), son of a Genevese, the pupil of Zuccarelli and the drawing-master of the daughters

of George III. None of these would have liked to have been called a 'draughtsman.' Then there were also a few marine-painters, among whom should be mentioned the Cleveleys, John and Robert; John (1747–1786), pupil of Paul Sandby, who held an appointment in Deptford Dockyard, and Robert his twin brother (1747–1809), marine-painter to the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Clarence. There was William Anderson also (1757–1837), originally a shipwright, whose works, according to the catalogue of the South Kensington Museum, 'show a practical nautical knowledge.' Perhaps the marine water-colour painters of this period, even including the best of them, Nicholas Pocock (died 1821, aged eighty), were not very great artists; and though they drew sea and shipping and sometimes great naval engagements with long lines of three-deckers and plenty of smoke, they differed little from architectural draughtsmen, except that their architecture was naval, and water took the place of land. Their works can

be studied at South Kensington and the British Museum, but neither they nor the Faringtons, nor the Gresses, count for very much in the history of English water-colour.

But Pocock has a separate claim to mention as a landscape-painter. He did not draw very well, his trees and mountains and clouds are conventional and poor in form; but he had a sense of composition, and some of his drawings, with their tender blue distances and warm foregrounds, are pretty, and show enough artistic taste to entitle him to a place among the more modest precursors of Girtin and Turner. It is, however, among the architectural draughtsmen that most of these will be found.

One of them was Michael Angelo Rooker, A.R.A. (1743–1801), the son of the engraver, and himself one till his sight became impaired. He is another of the artists who gained instruction from Paul Sandby, but he also studied at the St. Martin's Lane Academy and the Royal Academy. After he gave up engraving, he

became principal scene-painter to the Haymarket Theatre; and it was not till about 1788 that he began those pedestrian tours through England to which we owe the majority of his water-colour drawings. They have a charm of their own, delicate indeed, not to be 'tasted' perhaps by all, because the limits of his art as he knew it have been since so far overstepped by later men; but real enough for those who can make allowance for his disadvantages. He could draw architecture beautifully, and if he could not place the sun in the heavens, he could surround his buildings with an envelope of faint sunlit air. He drew figures also well, and knew how to introduce them; and his drawings are always delightful in taste and tone. If he was never strong, he was always a refined, picturesque, and unaffected artist.

The method of these early men was so much alike, the scope of their art so much the same, and the advance that they individually made in the art of water-colour so comparatively slight,

that it is not easy to apportion to them their exact share in the progress. Every artist of any individuality adds perhaps something to the resources of art; but it is hardly necessary here to attempt to distinguish between the characteristics of such men as William Marlow (1740–1813) and William Pars (1742–1782), though both were of some note in their day, and the latter was much employed by the Dilettanti Society in Greece and Rome, and had his share with Revett in illustrating Dr. Chandler's 'Travels.' Of William Payne (of whose birth and death the dates are unrecorded, but who exhibited from 1776 to 1830) something more may be said. Although he was a mannerist, his manner was his own; and he became the most fashionable teacher of his day. He was one of the many artists (Haydon, Sir Joshua Reynolds, Prout, and Eastlake among them) who were born at or near Plymouth, and is said to have been self-taught. His style is thus described by Redgrave:—'He had great dexterity of hand, working with the

brush, almost excluding outline. His colour was brilliant; his style marked by vivid effects of sunshine and light and shade, produced by the opposition of warm colours and grey aerial tints.' This was his distinction, and he may claim to have advanced water-colour art in the direction of colour, and the expression of sunshine and atmosphere; but he was a poor draughtsman, and his foliage is of the most conventional kind. He is also noted for the invention of a grey or 'aerial tint,' composed of indigo, raw sienna, and lake, which was, and is still, sold in cakes as 'Payne's Grey.'

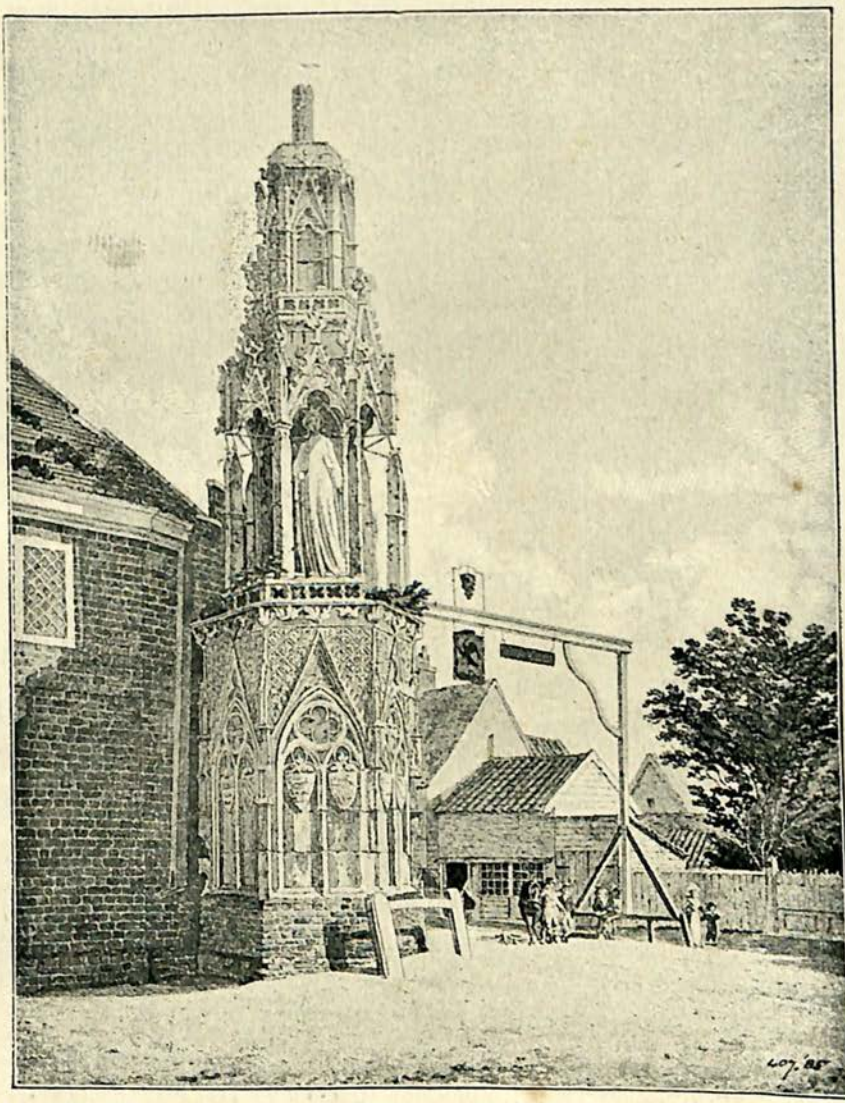
All these artists, transitional in *technique* between Cozens and Girtin (though in fact the contemporaries of both, and of Paul Sandby also), employed line and wash with varied skill to represent scenery and buildings as faithfully as their means allowed. Though they trusted mainly to convention or traditional formulæ for their trees and skies, and were seldom actuated by purely pictorial motives, they gradually

approached more nearly to the true representation of air, distance, and sunshine, and so helped to create a new and native landscape art based not upon the 'old masters,' whether Dutch, French, or Italian, but upon their own observation of nature. Theirs is all honest, modest work, done without ambition of fame or prospect of large gain, but ever interesting and worthy of praise for its frankness and sincerity. It may seem to some to have its pathetic side also, this craft so highly trained and laborious, and yet failing from restriction of aim and inadequacy of means to achieve any great artistic results. Such success as they had seems smaller to us, perhaps, than it did to the artists, for we can and must compare their works with those of later men who could not only draw architecture as well, but could draw trees, and mountains, and water, and skies much better; who could, in place of two or three faint tints, command all the colours of the rainbow and find means of expressing the most striking and the most subtle of

atmospherical effects. But these 'draughtsmen' could draw architecture, and in this respect at least might regard their work with something like complete satisfaction.

And having drawn their architecture, whether castle or cottage, well and faithfully, they had done almost all that was demanded of them; for, broadly speaking, to draw architecture was the *raison d'être* of the draughtsman,—the one thing he was expected to do perfectly. Some, like the Thomas Maltons, scarcely attempted to do anything else. The elder (1726–1801) is best known by his 'Treatise on Perspective on the Principles of Dr. Taylor' (1775); the younger (1748–1804) has a special interest as one of Turner's masters. How much he taught Turner is a question. Turner is reputed to have said that his 'real master' was 'Tom Malton, of Long Acre.' But there is another story which tells that Malton could do nothing with him, and sent him back to his father as 'impenetrably dull.' At all events, Malton was quite competent to teach the young

genius a great deal. Most of his drawings that I have seen—street scenes in London, some of them of large size—are ably executed, the architecture accurately drawn, if with a hard and precise outline, the figures well introduced and various, but rather tall and stiff, in brightly coloured costumes of the day. As records of the appearance of London at the time, they are valuable, but they have not much pictorial beauty. Some of Turner's early drawings are of precisely this character. But there are other drawings ascribed to Malton which show something more than a draughtsman's ability in line and wash, have much tenderness in the drawing, and a painter's feeling for arrangement and quality of colour. There is such a drawing among the Maltons at South Kensington Museum. It looks as if it were by quite a different hand. The authorities there seem to be in some doubt as to which of the Maltons the different drawings which bear the name should be attributed. Some of the frames are plainly labelled 'Thomas



WALTHAM CROSS. *By T. Malton.*

Malton, Junior,' but in the Catalogue they are all ascribed to Thomas Malton, Senior. They are probably all by the son.

The little drawing reproduced here, to which I wish specially to call attention is of a Queen Eleanor's Cross, elaborately decorated and carved, with houses to left and right, and a tree. The cross is beautifully drawn, not in hard regular lines as of a drawing pen, but with soft and broken strokes of a lead-pencil, still observable under the light and delicate washes of water-colour. It shines gently in the sun, it gleams gently in the shade, and it throws a transparent shadow on the brick house to the left. Nowhere will you find brick-work much more beautifully painted than in this house, in shade or out of shade. It is the quality of the colour, its preservation of broad general tone, with infinite variety and play of colour within it that is perhaps the most remarkable thing in the drawing, but it is throughout not only good but choice in colour, and altogether a masterly little picture worthy to

rank with the best of Van der Heyden's Dutch streets. It is to be wished—it is often to be wished with regard to these early water-colours—that it were dated. Did Turner learn this quality of colour from Malton, or did Malton learn it from him, or is this drawing by some other artist? Such questions are always arising in examining these early drawings, for the progress was so rapid towards the end of the last century that the pupil of to-day might almost (if he were a Girtin, or a Turner, or a Francia) become the master of to-morrow, and Malton lived till 1804 and went on exhibiting till 1803, or one year after Girtin's death.

For this reason date of birth is but an insecure guide in tracing the history of water-colour art, especially as some artists began late in life. But yet it is some guide, and it will be seen that all, or nearly all, the artists specially mentioned in this chapter were born in the forties of last century and had formed their style long before Turner or Girtin appeared on the scene. To

these artists another must be added, the most important perhaps of all, as he was the most accomplished and complete. This was Thomas Hearne (1744–1817).

This artist, whose position in the history of English water-colour art has scarcely been sufficiently recognised, was a typical example of the 'draughtsman.' Like Rooker, he commenced life as an engraver; serving an apprenticeship of six years (beginning in 1765) to William Woollett. In 1771 he went to the Leeward Islands with Lord Lavington, the newly appointed Governor of that Possession; and remained there (according to Redgrave's 'Dictionary') three years and a half, 'making drawings of the harbours, forts, and other characteristic features of the islands,' and for nearly two years after his return was engaged in the completion of the work. This employment turned the direction of his art from engraving to drawing in water-colours; and in 1777 he, in conjunction with William Byrne, the engraver, commenced the most important undertaking of

his life, 'The Antiquities of Great Britain,' for which he executed all the drawings, fifty-two in number, a task which employed him till 1781. The extensive tours throughout Great Britain required for this work brought him daily in contact with nature; and while in search of antiquities he discovered new truths, or, at least, how to paint old ones. He certainly advanced water-colour art considerably. In the use of his materials he was perfectly accomplished; he drew architecture beautifully, and in the drawing of trees and skies he excelled nearly all his predecessors. In the matter of foliage, indeed, he was in his earlier drawings conventional, and even in his latest somewhat mannered; but he always took great pains in the drawing of the trunk and the boughs; and it will be evident from his pencil drawings of which a facsimile is given, how close and fresh was his observation of nature, and what a sure, bright touch he had. His effects were generally, if not always, of calm sunshine, his skies simple but original and effec-

tive, the blue often appearing through rifts of rather thin and ragged white cloud; the perspective of his drawings was always excellent, their design effective, and they are clear and pure as few of his contemporaries' were. His distances in his best drawings are sometimes admirable stretches of distant country, with spire and cottage and river and meadow sparkling in the sunlight, to the verge of a far horizon. In atmospheric perspective, in truth of sunlight, and in colour also, he advanced his art beyond the Pococks and the Rookers; and though Turner soon surpassed him in certain qualities, especially in warmth and gradation of sunlight, it was long before Turner could produce anything so perfect, as a whole, as one of Hearne's best drawings.

There are some good ones at South Kensington; the *Village Alehouse*, painted 1796, the *Monastery Gate, St. Albans* (1795), and two almost monochrome but delightfully silvery views of water and shipping, excelling, I think, in artistic quality any contemporary efforts in this

direction in water-colour. But none of these drawings equal some left by Mr. Henderson to the British Museum; where also his skill in portrait and lead-pencil may be seen in a pretty little portrait of Sir Joseph Banks, and another of his master, Woollett, the engraver. There also is the pencil sketch and the drawing of Elvet Bridge, Durham, here reproduced. The latter shows the curious old bridge with houses on it, still much as they were in Hearne's time. Perhaps the finest drawings at the British Museum for distance and delicate colour are those of *Hitchin Priory*, *Herts*, and *Near Ashstead, Surrey* (1859, 5, 28, 211, 210). For elegance of composition (not altogether uninfluenced by Gainsborough perhaps) is the *View Near Witham*, with its well-drawn, and elegantly introduced cart and horses, and its moving water disturbed by the runnel which drops into it in the foreground; very good and original also is the rifted sky. This is probably an earlier drawing, and does not show quite the accom-

ELVET BRIDGE, DURHAM. *By T. Hearne.*

plishment of the Hitchin, nor of two beautiful drawings of Chepstow and Monmouth, which were executed in 1794. For elegance of composition the latter is the most charming of all, and its aërial perspective is perfect. Allowing for the suggestion of Gainsborough in the scene *Near Witham* all these drawings appear to be quite original and fresh, except for some conventions for foliage, which were then common to all artists. It is not of his predecessors that he reminds one, but of his successor, Turner. A good opportunity of comparing their work (Hearne's later and Turner's early work) was afforded a few years ago by the exhibition of early architectural drawings at the Burlington Fine Arts Club. In the treatment of simple subjects, as of a church, or a ruined arch smitten with sunlight, it was not easy to give the palm to either. Turner's sunlight was brighter, Hearne's tone was more perfect. A comparison of the earlier Turners and the later Hearnes at the British Museum confirms the

view that Turner was more indebted to Hearne than any other of the elder water-colourists (with the exception of Cozens), and the reason why he was so seems also clear—he was the best artist of them all. At the same time, it must not be forgotten that Hearne did not get so far beyond the 'tinted' method as 'Warwick' or 'Italian' Smith, mentioned on page 48. The later of his charming drawings of Italy and Switzerland, 1786 to 1795, several of which have been given by Sir Walter Trevelyan to the British and the South Kensington Museums, show that Smith distinctly advanced the art of water-colour, and are probably brighter and richer in colour than any executed in transparent water-colour before. He endeavoured to combine the poetical feeling of J. R. Cozens with a fuller realisation of Nature's colours, and appears to have preceded both Girtin and Turner in laying in objects with the local colour and dispensing with the preliminary neutral ground. But there is no reason to suppose that Turner

VIEW NEAR WITHAM. *By T. Hearne.*

was influenced by Smith, and although the latter lived till 1831 and became President of the Water-Colour Society, he never fulfilled the promise of these earlier drawings.

I have said that Hearne was a typical draughtsman, and this he certainly was, whether we regard his life or his work, or the result of both. He passed through all the experience of which a 'draughtsman' was capable. His birth was provincial and humble (he was born at Brinkworth near Malmesbury, and was intended for a trade); he was apprenticed to an engraver as some other draughtsmen were; he gained a premium at the Society of Arts a few years after its foundation; he had his voyage abroad, and his spell of pure draughtsman's work in a distant country; he took his pedestrian tours through the length and breadth of Great Britain; he was associated in the production of a great illustrated work on Antiquities; he exhibited his drawings constantly at all the Exhibitions (Society of Artists, Free Society, and Royal Academy) from 1765 to

1806; he was a frequent guest of that Maecenas of draughtsmen, Dr. Monro of the Adelphi, and also probably of that other Maecenas, Mr. John Henderson; he did as much as any draughtsman to advance his art from topography to landscape, and from tinting to colour; and, finally, he was one of those, and not the least of them, to contribute towards the education of the great genius of Turner.

IV.

TURNER AND GIRTIN.

THE first historian of the school of water-colour painting in England (indeed, if we except the Redgraves,[1] the only one), was W. H. Pyne (1769–1843)—a writer, who had exceptional qualifications for the task, as he himself practised the art with much skill, and had seen it rise from its dawn to its zenith. He was also in a position and of a disposition to acquire special knowledge of its followers, as he was a sociable man, popular in the circle of water-colour painters of his time, and a visitor

[1] This is no longer true, for, since the first edition of this book, Mr. John Lewis Roget has published his admirable and almost exhaustive 'History of the "Old Water-Colour" Society' (Longmans, 1891).

at Dr. Monro's, of whose house and the meetings there he has left a short but lively record.[1] There are a few of his landscapes at South Kensington, and at the British Museum, dexterous in execution and refined in feeling, but he devoted himself more especially to the composition of small and neatly-executed groups of figures 'for the embellishment of landscape,' over a thousand of which were included in his principal work of this kind, called 'The Microcosm, or a picture delineation of the Arts, Agriculture, Manufactures, &c., of Great Britain,' 2 vols. folio, 1806. His 'History of the Royal Residences,' with numerous richly-coloured plates, was another work of importance in its day, but it is more in connexion with his literary work—papers contributed to the 'Literary Gazette,' and afterwards published under the well-known title of 'Wine and Walnuts,' and his employment as editor of and contributor to the short-lived 'Somerset House Gazette' (1823–4), that he

[1] See page 78.

calls for any extended notice here. In the papers so published we find the first record by a contemporary of the foundation of the water-colour school, and of the early practice of Turner and Girtin, who between them liberated water-colour from the bonds of archaeological and topographical illustration, and made it rank as a fine art.

But, before we arrive at the point from which we can best survey this practice, something should be said of another artist who had no little influence on both these remarkable youths. This was Edward Dayes (1763–1804), the master of Girtin, who is held by some to have had more influence on Turner than Turner's own master, Thomas Malton. Thomas Malton is, on the other hand, considered by the same authorities to have had more influence on Girtin than on Turner. Such questions are hard to decide, especially in the case of Turner and Girtin, for Turner may be said to have formed himself upon everybody and Girtin to have formed himself

upon none, or, in other words, even the early work of Girtin shows the preponderating influence of his own individuality, while Turner's early work shows the well-defined influence of now one and now another artist (including Girtin), till long after 'poor Tom' had shaken off every trace of his studentship.

There is this, however, to be said in favour of the theory just mentioned; there are many drawings by Dayes of scenery in England—tinted drawings washed with gradations of bluey grey for distance and sky, and with foreground deepened and strengthened with Indian ink—that might well pass, and have often probably been sold for early 'blue drawings' by Turner. An interesting sketch-book, full of such drawings, perfect in manipulative skill within their limits, was in the possession of the late Mr. Crawford Pocock, of Brighton. On the other hand, the portfolios of drawings bequeathed by Mr. John Henderson to the British Museum contained several careful copies by Girtin, of Malton's

drawings of London buildings. No doubt both the younger men profited in divers ways from the examples of both the elders, and there was not any one (with the exception, perhaps, of Paul Sandby) from whom they could pick up such varied knowledge as from Dayes. For he was a man of much accomplishment in different directions, a good draughtsman not only of architecture, but of the figure, an original observer of nature, with much feeling for the poetry of effect, and was possessed of an imagination that did not confine itself to mundane subjects. His art ranged from topographical drawings, 'neatly laid in Indian ink and tinted,' to *The Fall of the Angels*, and *The Triumph of Beauty*. I have never seen any of the scriptural and classic drawings which he produced in the later years of his short life, but the fine view of *Ely Cathedral* in South Kensington Museum, and the views of *Windermere* and *Keswick Lake* which hang beside it, are quite enough to prove that in the poetical treatment of natural fact,

and in knowledge of atmospheric effect, he went beyond most of his predecessors. Of the grace and ability with which he drew groups of figures the Museum also contains a good example in *Buckingham House, St. James' Park*, 1780. *The Trial of Warren Hastings in Westminster Abbey*, and two scenes of the *Royal Procession to St. Paul's on the Thanksgiving for the King's Recovery in* 1789, are works of the same order, well known by engravings. He was an engraver, a miniature-painter, and also a writer of some papers on Art, including one giving Instructions for Drawing and Colouring Landscapes, which is interesting as a guide to the practice of water-colour before the revolution effected by his pupil Girtin. He gives but two methods, one the laying in of the shades with Prussian blue and Indian ink, and the other the laying in of light, shade, and all, with a dead colouring as in oil painting, but he specially warns the student against introducing the colour of an object in its shade, and the notion of

BUCKINGHAM HOUSE, ST. JAMES' PARK. *By E. Dayes.*

commencing with local colour does not appear to have entered his head notwithstanding the example of his pupil. Indeed, he seems to have had a very inadequate appreciation of Girtin's talent. They had quarrelled during Girtin's apprenticeship, and the slight note which Dayes left about Girtin is chiefly condemnatory of his moral conduct (which both he and Edwards, not to mention later writers, have most unjustly aspersed), and ends by thus damning his art with faint praise.

'Though his drawings are generally too slight, yet they must ever be admired as the offspring of a strong imagination. Had he not trifled away a vigorous constitution, he might have arrived at a very high degree of excellence as a landscape-painter.'

Dayes, who does not seem to have had a very genial or amiable disposition, died by his own hand in 1804.

There has been a great deal of dispute with regard to the years in which Turner and Girtin

were born, but, though no record of Girtin's birth has been discovered, it is now generally admitted that they were both born in the same year (1775). Turner on the 23rd of April, and Girtin on the 18th of February—a difference of two months instead of two years. The records of their early lives are so bound together that it will be as difficult as undesirable to dissociate them, but I propose as far as possible to treat of the elder first.

Thomas Girtin (1775–1802), according to Mr. Thomas Miller's 'Turner and Girtin's Picturesque Views Sixty Years Since,' published in 1854, was the son of a ropemaker, who died when he was eight years old. His mother was married again to a pattern-draughtsman named Vaughan, and Girtin lived with her at 2, St. Martin's-le-Grand till the year 1796. Except that he began to draw early, we know nothing of him before his meeting with Turner, and their studies together at Dr. Monro's, and in the open air. Perhaps they first met at the Doctor's—perhaps at John Raphael

Smith's, the engraver's (as Alaric Watts has it), for whom they both used to colour prints. John Raphael Smith (1752–1812), now best known for his celebrated mezzotint engravings after Reynolds and others, was also a good painter in oils and water-colours, and the master of De Wint and Hilton. He was, in addition, a publisher and dealer in prints, and it is therefore very probable that the two often met at his shop. At Dr. Monro's house they certainly did, and at Mr. Henderson's, who lived next door to the Doctor in Adelphi Terrace. Dr. Thomas Monro, of Fetcham and Bedford Square, and afterwards of Bushey and Adelphi Terrace, Physician of Bridewell and Bethlehem Hospitals, was a great lover of art and a special encourager of the water-colour artists. He had portfolios full of drawings by old and modern masters, by Vandevelde and Canaletti and Titian, by Cozens and Gainsborough, Barret and Hearne [1]; and at his

[1] Many of these were inherited from his father, Dr. John Monro

conversaziones in the evening, artists, both young and old, would congregate. His portfolios were open for the young to copy, and Turner and Girtin were free to come and draw at his house in the evening, receiving their supper and half-a-crown for the evening's work. Mr. Miller tells us that 'Old Pine' (W. H. Pyne), of 'Wine and Walnuts' celebrity, used to say, 'What a glorious coterie there was when Wilson, Marlow, Gainsborough, Paul and Tom Sandby, Rooker, Hearne, and Cozins (Cozens), used to meet; and you, old Jack,' turning to Varley, 'were a boy in a pinafore, with Turner and Girtin and Edridge as big-wigs on whom you used to look as something beyond the usual amount of clay.'[1] They drew also at Mr. Henderson's. Turner's preference was for Cozens and Hearne, Girtin's for Malton, Canaletti, and Piranesi. Girtin's draw-

[1] This spirited passage has often been quoted, but Pyne must have drawn somewhat on his fancy when he uttered it, as Wilson died in 1782, when Turner and Girtin were but seven years old, and Varley only four. Gainsborough died in 1788, when Varley was ten.

ings for Mr. Henderson are at the British Museum now, and are remarkable for the freedom and skill of their execution, grasping, as it were, the whole subject and rendering it in a faithful but still personal manner. The strength and accuracy of his draughtsmanship with the pen are specially noticeable in his copies of Piranesi's prints. There is no fumbling or work of a tentative kind; every touch decisive and to the purpose. He copied also some of Mr. Henderson's own drawings, and his copy of Morland's *Dogs hesitating about the Pluck* is in a singularly free and bold manner, showing how soon he began to master his materials, and to *paint* in water-colours as no one had done before. This, in one word, was the distinction of his method, and is well described by W. H. Pyne, who was probably the first to put in print what has since been often repeated by others.

'This artist (Girtin) prepared his drawings on the same principle which had hitherto been confined to painting in oil, namely, laying in the object upon his paper with the local

colour, and shadowing the same with the individual tint of its own shadow. Previous to the practice of Turner and Girtin, drawings were shadowed first entirely through, whatever their component parts — houses, cattle, trees, mountains, foregrounds, middle-grounds, and distances, all with black or grey, and these objects were afterwards stained or tinted, enriched and finished, as is now the custom to colour prints. It was this new practice, introduced by these distinguished artists, that acquired for designs in water-colours upon paper the title of paintings, a designation which many works of the existing school decidedly merit, as we lately beheld in the Exhibition of the Painters in Water Colours, where pictures of this class were displayed in gorgeous frames, bearing out in effect against the mass of glittering gold as powerfully as pictures in oil.'

This and subsequent descriptions, though true in the main, must be accepted with some reservation. Girtin was not the first probably to dispense with the ground colour for shades. John (Warwick) Smith (1742–1831), as we have seen, was before him, and there was a drawing by Willey Reveley in the late Dr. Percy's collection, a large view in Greece or Turkey, probably, with a mountain and a figure, the whole of which

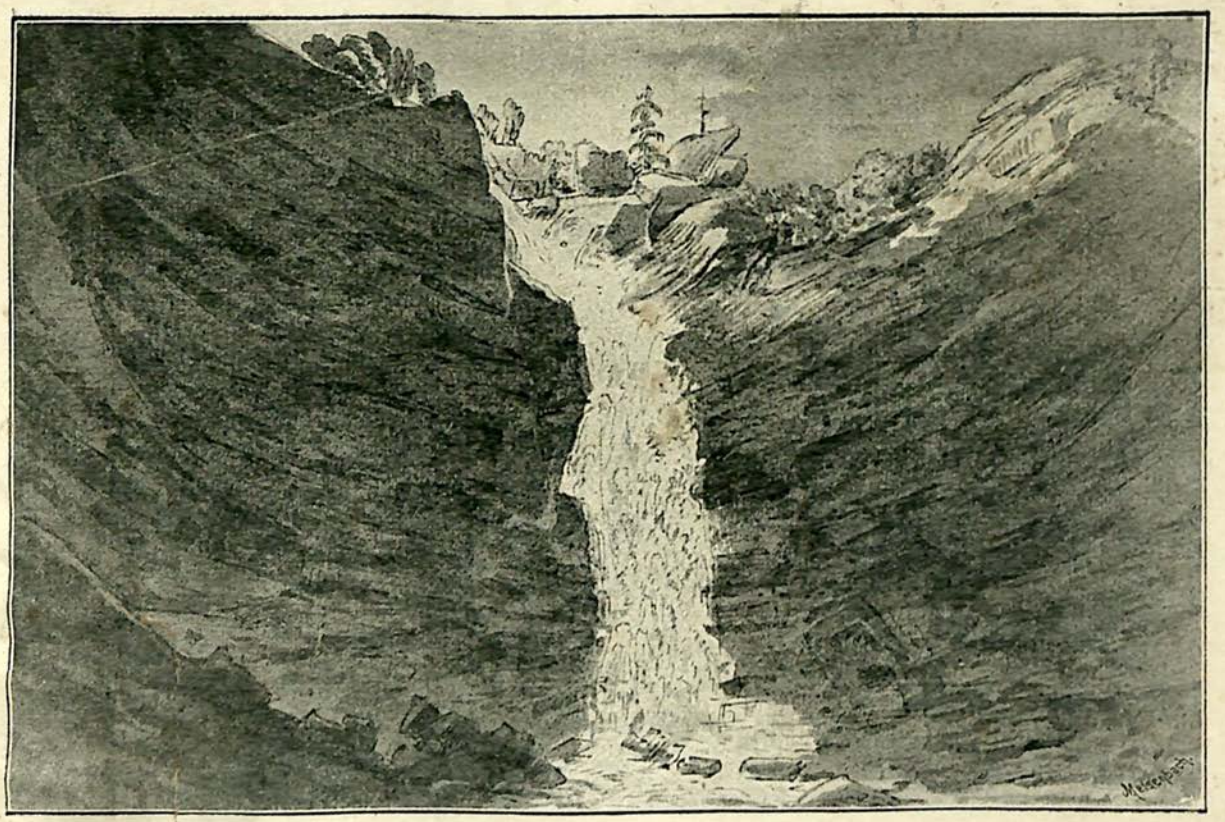
[1] This was written in 1824.

is put in in colours (and bright colours) at once. Reveley died in 1799, and this was probably drawn some years before. Moreover, Girtin himself used, even in late drawings, a preliminary light grey for some of his shadows, though he did not lay in the whole composition in neutral tint. His true originality in this particular consisted in regarding objects not as monochromes tinged with colour, but as coloured things modified by shade. No one could draw more correctly or cleverly than he did, but he soon regarded his outlines as mere indications to be obliterated, not filled in, with colour. They, and what ground colour he used for shade, were swamped with full washes and blots of colour or strong strokes with the red pen, by which colour, light, and form were broadly realised and fused together. In previous drawings the three stages—the outline, the shade, and the colour, were all distinctly preserved in the completed drawing. Those who wish to see what a master he was with the point should examine his pencil-sketches of Paris,

executed in the last years of his life, and now in the British Museum.

Girtin's genius was one which ripened with extraordinary quickness. While Turner was still plodding on in his endless study, Girtin had already completed his education. The grand style of Piranesi, the large manner of Canaletti, taught him all he needed in the way of art. He soon saw his way to express what he wished to express. He had an extraordinary gift of hand, a wonderful comprehension of any subject he chose to draw. At once he seems to have fixed in his mind an idea of what he wanted to represent—composition, colour, feeling, and all—and he went straight to work and realised it without doubt or difficulty. Few artists can be said to have known so clearly what they wanted to do and been able to do it with so little check.

In this, indeed, he was eminently blessed, not for ever like Sisyphus (or an art critic) attempting the impossible. But it must nevertheless not be supposed that his finest drawings, such as that



THE REICHENBACH. *From an Original Drawing by J. R. Cozens.*

THE REICHENBACH. *Copy by Turner of the Drawing by J. R. Cozens.*

magnificent one of *Bridgenorth*, were completed without thought or labour, only that he began them with a clear conception to which he adhered. A writer in the Library of the Fine Arts (probably W. H. Pyne) may be accepted as an authority on this point:—

'It might be supposed by the bold and broad execution which characterises, the works of Girtin, that they were mostly off-hand productions. The contrary, however, is the fact. It is true that he could sketch, and did occasionally dash in his effects with rapidity; but his finely coloured compositions, though apparently like the pictures by Wilson, the result of little labour, were wrought with much careful study and proportionate manual exertion. In certain of his productions I have frequently watched his progress, which, like Wilson's, was careful, notwithstanding his bold execution, even to fastidiousness. It is true he did not hesitate, nor undo what he once laid down, for he worked upon principle; but he reiterated his tints to produce splendour and richness, and repeated his depths to secure transparency of tone, with a perseverance that would surprise those who were not intimately acquainted with the difficult process of water-colour painting, to produce works that merit the designation of pictures.'

The training of Turner and Girtin seems to have been as nearly as possible identical. They

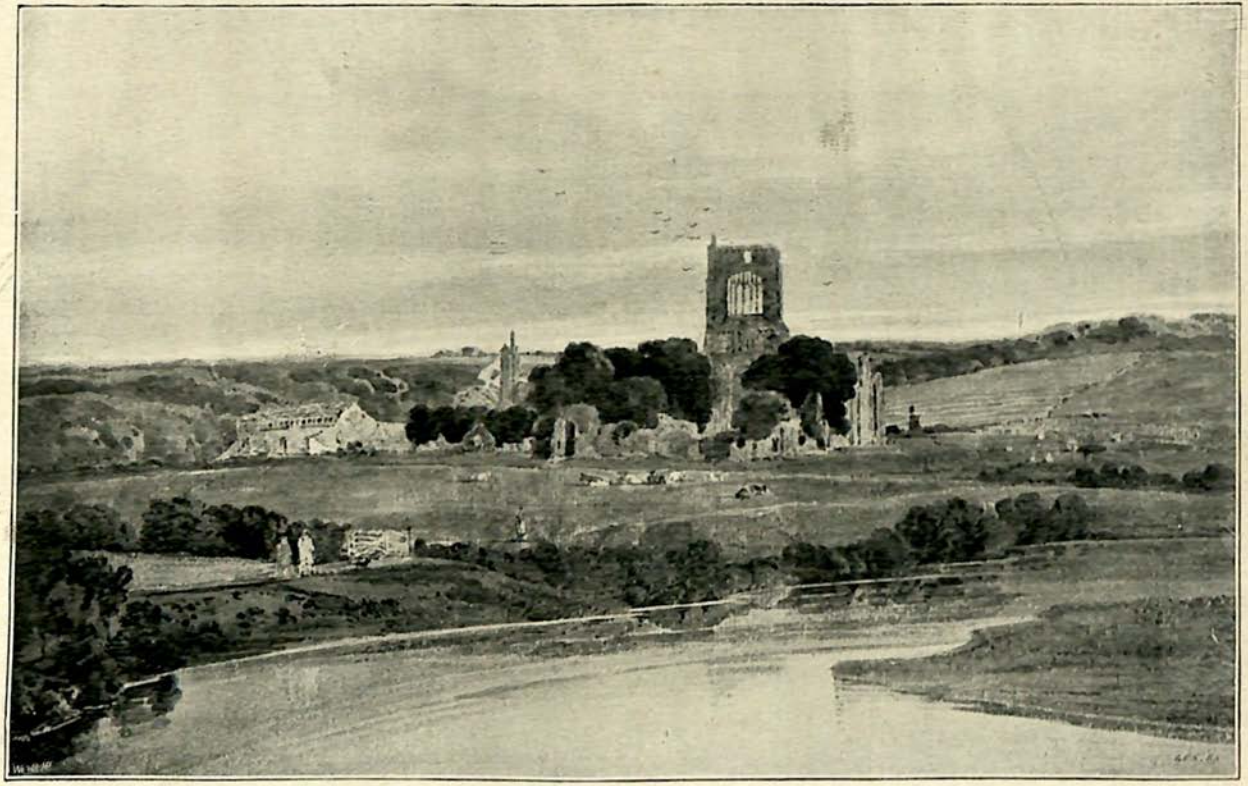
both coloured prints for Raphael Smith; both washed in skies and foregrounds for architects; both 'improved' the sketches of amateurs; both copied drawings at Dr. Monro's and Mr. Henderson's; both sketched in and about London, especially on the shores of the Thames between the Savoy and Lambeth. But two more different beings were never associated together, their characters and artistic tendencies were essentially distinct, and of the amount of affection that subsisted between them we have no sure knowledge. Being 'boys together,' it ought to have been warm and intimate, but Turner was so reserved and unsociable, Girtin so open and warm-hearted, that it is probable that they were companions rather than comrades, even in their boyhood; afterwards they went on more extended sketching tours, but they went each by himself, and when Girtin formed a little social coterie of sketchers a few years before his early death, Turner was not of the party. This, the earliest London 'Sketching Society,' was composed of

ten members, some of whom became famous. Their names were: Robert Ker Porter, Augustus Callcott (both afterwards knighted), T. R. Underwood, G. Samuel, P. S. Murray, John Sell Cotman, L. Francia, W. H. Worthington, J. C. Denham, and T. Girtin. They met by turn at each other's rooms, and each made a sketch from the same passage of an English poet. The host of the evening provided the materials and refreshments and kept the sketches. Some of these sketches are still preserved, and lately a little book, once belonging to Sir R. K. Porter and containing probably a number of them as well as some others, was sold at Christie's for £120.

Like Turner, also, Girtin went on his travels, sketching for J. Walker, the publisher of the 'Copperplate Magazine' and 'Itinerant.' The first engraving from Turner appeared in 1794; the first from Girtin in 1792. The most notable of the drawings executed by Girtin for Walker were, perhaps, the *Bamborough Castle* and *Christchurch Abbey, Hampshire*, the former of which is

specially to be admired for the grandeur of its design.

Like Turner, again, Girtin's genius was greatly developed by a visit to the north of England. This was probably about 1796, to judge from the subjects of the drawings he sent to the Royal Academy. He began to exhibit there in 1794 with a drawing of Ely Cathedral, and in the following year he exhibited views of Warwick Castle and Peterborough and Lichfield Cathedrals, but in 1797 we find among his ten drawings Jedburgh Abbey, two of St. Cuthbert's, Holy Island, four views of York and one of Ouse Bridge in the same city—that picturesque old bridge, with the gate-house, of which he perhaps left more drawings than of any other subject. In the north he made many sketches of pure landscape, recording the grand effects of light and shade upon the swelling moors and rolling downs, with a breadth and simplicity and a large regard to truth never equalled before. It is a pity that his 'business' confined his art so much to the



KIRKSTALL ABBEY. *By Thomas Girtin.*

architectural—to the abbeys and cathedrals and the bridges of England. It is true that he treated them with a sympathy, a sense of their own being and beauty, in a word, with a poetic realism which not even Turner (who was always thinking how he could improve them) could compass, but it is to be wished that he had left us more of the impressions of Nature received by him when alone with her 'over the hills and far away.

V.

TURNER AND GIRTIN.

WITH Girtin's death may be said to have ended the older school of water-colour. He had changed its method, altered its spirit, and inaugurated a new school of colour, but it still, especially in the modest tints of its colouring, bore traces of its parentage. He had released it from the land of bondage, but the brilliant domain on which it was entering—where light was more liquid and colour more pure than in any other region of art—was still a promised land—or rather, perhaps, an untrodden and unknown land, not even promised. Thomas Girtin went, but Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851) remained, and the latter therefore belongs not only to the older school and the transitional time, which was about

at its crisis in 1802, but also to the period of full development. His work may indeed be said to comprehend the whole movement from beginning to end, for there have been no discoveries of *technique*, no extensions of the range of landscape of very great importance, since his day. It will, therefore, be convenient to consider his earlier drawings first, down to the date of Girtin's death, and to treat the rest separately hereafter.

Little need be said of the facts of Turner's life in these early years; they have been recorded with variations by different biographers, and I have attempted to summarise and reconcile the different accounts in the volume on Turner in the 'Great Artist' Series. In addition to what has already been said in the previous chapter, and to what will appear subsequently in connexion with his drawings, it will be sufficient here to note the following facts. With the exception of a short period at school at Brentford and visits to Margate, Bristol, and other places, he spent his childhood and youth in

Maiden Lane, Covent Garden, where his father kept a barber's shop. His mother became insane about the year 1800. Among the elements of his training must not be forgotten the time in the office of Mr. Hardwick, the architect, where he gained a knowledge of architecture and obtained a power of delicate and precise draughtsmanship with the pencil. He entered the schools of the Royal Academy in 1789, and first exhibited there in 1790. In 1792 he obtained (from Mr. J. Walker) his first commissions for drawings to be engraved, and made his first tour in Wales. The first engraving from these drawings appeared in 'Walker's Magazine' for November, 1794, and subsequent engravings in this and other publications show extensive travelling in the south and midland counties of England. These were performed by him on foot, 'twenty to twenty-five miles a-day, with his little modicum of baggage at the end of a stick.' In 1797 he made his first tour in the north of England, in 1799 he was elected A.R.A., in 1800

he went to Scotland for the first time, and in this or next year to the Continent. In 1802 he became a Royal Academician.

Even the work of Turner's boyhood and early youth down to 1792, when he began to draw for the engravers, is so varied that it bears division into classes, which may be thus described :— 1. The drawings (mostly copies of prints coloured) which were put up for sale in the window of his father's shop in Maiden Lane. 2. Sketches made in London, principally on the shores of the Thames. 3. Drawings at Bristol and Margate, when he went on visits to his relations and friends. 4. Copies of drawings (principally by Cozens, but also by Hearne, Paul Sandby, Girtin, and others), which he made for Dr. Monro and Mr. Henderson.

Specimens of most of these may be studied in the National Gallery with the aid of Mr. Ruskin's admirable notes, and at the Whitworth Institute at Manchester, and frequent opportunity for examination of other examples has been afforded in recent years by the Exhibitions of the Bur-

lington Fine Arts Club and the Royal Academy. Their interest is mainly biographical; they show no strong and striking genius, but yet we find here and there distinct efforts at representing sunlight more warmly than had been done by previous artists in water-colour,[1] an instinct of composition, a daring choice of subject, and, especially in some of the earliest of all, a distinct sense of colour. Some of class 3, though almost monochrome, especially the copies of mountain scenery by Cozens, are drawn with such delicacy, show such mastery in the use of washes of colour, and so fine a sense of light and space and air, that they seem to belong to a later period than 1792, and at least prove how strongly his imagination was stimulated in sympathy with Cozens.

Between his pupilage (which may be said to have ended about 1792, or when he went on his first tour in Wales), and his election as a Royal

[1] Except by William Payne, to whose drawings some of these early ones of Turner bear a strong resemblance.

Academician in 1802, his work may again be divided into, (*a*) Topographical and architectural work done for engravings principally in 'Walker's Itinerant' (1794–1798), and 'Whitaker's Parish of Whalley,' published in 1800; (*b*) Drawings for exhibition at the Royal Academy (1792–1797), principally architectural, and specially distinguished above other men's work for the beauty of interiors of Gothic Churches and Cathedrals; (*c*) Drawings and paintings in oil, exhibited 1798 and after, of the romantic scenery of the North of England, Yorkshire, Cumberland, Northumberland, Lancashire, &c., in which he first showed his genius as a landscape-painter, as a master of effect, a passionate lover and deep observer of nature, and a pictorial poet; (*d*) Pictures, principally in oil, of sea and shipping; and (*e*) A few efforts of imagination, such as *The Battle of the Nile*, *The Fifth Plague of Egypt*, and *The Army of the Medes destroyed in the Desert by a Whirlwind.*

His work for the 'Itinerant,' and the 'Parish

of Whalley,' was able, careful, and dexterous—the work, in fact, of a first-rate 'draughtsman;' but these and other outdoor scenes of the period were distinguishable from the work of his fellows, not by any great grasp of his subject, poetical feeling, beauty of colour, or power of design, like Girtin's, but rather for their delicate and careful draughtsmanship of form, truth of illumination, observation of local tone and texture, especially of stone, brick, and plaster, in shade and sunlight. Of his beautiful pencil work at this time two examples may be mentioned, both of which have also unusual merit of design One is of the exterior of Malmesbury Abbey, the other of Kirkstall Crypt, the original sketch for the plate in the 'Liber Studiorum.' The drawings he now made of interiors were unmistakably superior to those of any of his contemporaries, if they have indeed ever been equalled by any artist in certain qualities of light and exquisite draughtsmanship. One of them, *Interior of Ely Cathedral* (1797), has been called 'divine' by Mr.

Rawlinson, in his 'Notes on the Exhibition of the Royal Academy in the Winter of 1887.' Two of them, both of Salisbury Cathedral (1799), are in the South Kensington Museum. Unfortunately no worthy translation into black and white of these masterpieces can be given on so small a page as this. One example of his interiors (in colour) is of a humbler order, but it has a special interest, as it is supposed to represent the underground cellar or kitchen of his father's old house in Maiden Lane, and the figure crooning by the copper is probably none other than his mother. It was in the artist's possession at his death, and is now in the National Gallery. It shows great dexterity in handling, especially in producing the effect of detail without labour (as in the playbill on the wall, which looks as if you could read it) and possesses that quality called 'infinity,' or endless variation of tone and surface, so that every atom (as in the stained plasterwork of the copper), seems to differ from the rest, as in Nature. If Turner had died in 1796, his special

triumphs as an artist would have been as a painter of interiors, and of light confined and reflected—a water-colour Steenwijck of a higher grade.

It was not apparently till his visit to the North, in 1797, that he began to be inspired by his intercourse with Nature, and to show the poetry that was in him—not till then did he become the serious rival of Girtin. Then all the long and severe training which he had undergone, all the years of quiet observation of Nature in all her moods which he had stored up, bore blossom and fruit. In these great drawings (Class *c*) of 1798–1802 he united many of the characteristics of Girtin with a poetic feeling and an invention more peculiarly his own.

The great characteristics of Girtin's art were simplicity and breadth, the elements of grandeur. He rejected from his art everything that was petty or superfluous, concentrating his mind on the larger truths of nature, and employing all his force on noble generalisation. He was the poet

at once of sunshine and of gloom, choosing in preference those effects of light which were soft and diffused, not sparkling and divided, but barred and crossed by broad waves of shadow, separating the subject into large masses of contrasted colour and tone. His temper was always calm and restful, careless for the most part as to choice of subject, but accepting it, whatever it was, as a thing whose nature and beauty were to be revealed; not, like Turner, as a thing to be treated and altered and twisted till it assumed a beauty in accordance with his taste, and a shape which conveyed an extrinsic idea. Girtin always surrendered himself to his subject, whether it was a landscape or a building. The quality of his poetry was expressive, not creative —he left creation to nature, and assumed the more humble *rôle* of interpreter. His imagination was nevertheless very sensitive to fine impressions, and this is seen not only in the effects of light and cloud in which he dressed the earth, but in the seizure of the grandest or

most interesting aspects of his architectural subjects, whether cathedral or simple street.

If Girtin's imagination was, on the one hand, passive, receptive, expressive, Turner's was, on the other, active, restless, creative, playing all round and about his subject, which often became at last, if not lost in its adornments, at least transformed beyond recognition. Girtin had turned topography into art, but his art was only Nature at her best; whereas Turner's was a different thing from Nature altogether, not only prose turned to poetry, but translated into another language. By its reflection in Girtin's mind, Nature became simplified, shorn of disturbing accident, aggrandised by omission of the trivial, but unaltered in its essential features; but Turner was never content with it as it was—it always suggested something else, something more beautiful or grand, better ordered, a vision not to be realised by suppression only, but by alterations, exaggeration, and reconstruction. The two may be taken as typical instances of the two classes

into which all poetical landscape-painters may be divided—Girtin of those who use themselves to express Nature, Turner of those who use Nature to express themselves.

Not that Girtin, in expressing Nature, did not express himself too. Indeed, he may be said to have done so more fully and completely than Turner did with all his thought and labour, but Girtin's was a more automatic and less conscious process, more spontaneous, and less intellectual, of a range narrower, but more certain within its limits, and, lastly, more perfect, but composed of fewer elements. In the growth of their genius Girtin and Turner are again typical of two classes of poetical artists — those whose individuality takes root at once, producing something new and distinctive, like some wild but unknown seed dropped by Nature into soil prepared for it, others whose flower is some exquisite and complex variety only to be produced by years of assiduous cultivation. To the one class belongs Masaccio, who suddenly did on the walls of the Brancacci

chapel those wonderful frescoes by which, at one unexpected stroke, the claims both of Nature and art were satisfied for the first time in the history of modern art. How the power was acquired, how the thought and the skill were matured, we are equally ignorant. He came and he went, having spent just about the same time on earth as Girtin. As Girtin to Masaccio so Turner to Raphael — a genius many-sided, and of an extraordinary gift to assimilate from every source of Nature and art all that was needed to nourish his genius. We can see how Raphael learnt sweetness from Perugino, mystery from Leonardo, and strength from Masaccio and Michelangelo, and made them all harmonious and his own by virtue of 'a certain idea' which governed his hand, and created even as it copied.

Turner's models were of a different kind— Wilson and Hearne, Sandby and Cozens, Claude and Vandevelde, Titian and Girtin, in art; and, instead of beautiful men and women of Umbria and Rome, sunsets at Margate and sunrises on

the Yorkshire wolds: but it is not the present purpose to draw comparison between Turner and Raphael except in so far as it illustrates the contrast between Turner and Girtin.

One point of contrast already mentioned was in the quality of invention or imagination. Girtin, as I have said, surrendered himself to his subject, Turner did not; one simplified while the other embellished, one revealed while the other created. The 'need of creating' was indeed strong upon Turner, even from the first. Through all but the last few years of the period we are now considering, his invention was kept down by the appetite for study and the quantity of set work which he had to get through, but it is nearly always traceable. How soon he threw off all topographical restraint, so that his drawings were widely, even recklessly unfaithful to the actual appearance of the places they were supposed to represent, has been very plainly shown by Mr. Hamerton in his 'Life of Turner.' It was in 1801 probably

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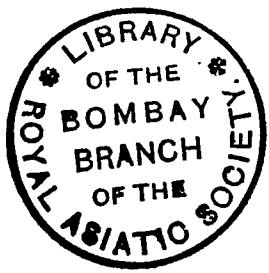
that he made the study of *Kilchurn Castle*, from which he composed the picture sent to the Academy in 1802, but though the impression was so recent, and he had his sketch (no doubt fairly faithful) to guide him, we find that he has not only completely changed the character of the country (river, mountain, foreground, background, and all), but built out of his own imagination a 'castle quite different from the real one.' 'It is a Turner, and nothing but a Turner,' says Mr. Hamerton. The moral aspect of the matter need not concern us here. It has been treated by Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Hamerton, and others elsewhere. Here the instance of Kilchurn may be taken to prove, not how far Turner, in 1802, had become callous to local fidelity, but that even at that time his imagination could and did, when he chose, completely transform the facts of his subject. It had not attained such dominant strength without many and constant endeavours, nor is it easy to determine when the struggle began. I am not sure

that it might not be found if we were to compare some of his boy's 'shilling' drawings with the originals. It is certain that the possession and exercise of an extraordinary faculty of invention is plainly perceptible in those engravings in Boswell's 'Antiquities of England and Wales,' which he coloured while at school at Brentwood about 1786. They display bold effects of light and colour, which not only embellish, but in some sense transform, the poor, lifeless, line-engravings of Noble. That in a very literal sense he 'created even as he copied' we are able to prove by two illustrations to this chapter, one of which represents an original drawing by John Robert Cozens of *The Reichenbach*, and the other a copy of it by Turner. The Cozens belonged to the late Hon. R. Allanson-Winn, the Turner belongs to Mr. Frank Dillon, and it is owing to their kindness that I am able to illustrate so forcibly Turner's early habit of improving upon his subjects. The original was drawn in 1776, and the copy probably some

twelve or fifteen years later. It will be seen that Turner has not been satisfied with this plain, and no doubt comparatively faithful, transcript from Nature. The sides of the cliff have been too monotonous for him, the fall of the water too tame, the whole drawing too empty of light. While adhering nearly literally to the main lines, and not disturbing the place or shape of the bunches of vegetation and groups of stones, he has broken off a piece of the rock at the top, and let in a bright burst of sunshine through the gap, has swollen the meagre fall into a torrent, and filled up the uninteresting hollow with clouds of spray.

What Turner did with Cozens' drawings he did afterwards with Nature, but I must leave for the present any further consideration of the fine drawings of 1798–1802, only adding that, though they were the heralds of a greater genius than Girtin's, it is doubtful whether, if both had died in 1802, the palm in the history of English water-colour art would have been

awarded to the painter of *Norham Castle* or the painter of *Bridgenorth:* certainly the former picture would never have been painted but for the example of Girtin.



VI.

FRANCIA, BONINGTON, AND COTMAN.

THE choice of 1802 as the close of a period in Turner's art is useful because it was the year of Girtin's death, but not only for this reason. In this year also Turner was elected a Royal Academician; and he afterwards exhibited comparatively few water-colour drawings. He never belonged to either of the Water-Colour Societies, and so far as the public were concerned, he was hereafter principally known as a painter in oil, his water-colours reaching them only in translation by engraving. Moreover, the year 1802 marks another important fact in his life. The subjects of his exhibited works were still exclusively English; but in 1803 six out of his seven con-

tributions to the walls of the Academy were scenes from the Continent. Among them were two large oil pictures, *The Vintage at Macon*, lent by the Earl of Yarborough in the winter of 1887–8 to the Grosvenor Gallery, and *Calais Pier*, the well-known picture in the National Gallery. The other contribution was a *Holy Family*. So far had Turner got away from mere topography and England; so far also from Girtin.

Besides all this, the popular knowledge of Turner may be said to begin with the painting of *Calais Pier*, for the best of his previous work has, till within the last few years, been comparatively lost sight of. A few interesting but unimportant drawings and water-colours in the vaults of the National Gallery, and a few dark oil pictures upstairs, attracted but little attention in the presence of his more brilliant later masterpieces; and even the Ellison and the William Smith gifts at the South Kensington Museum contained only one important example of the period—the *Warkworth Castle*

of 1799. But latterly nearly all the great drawings of his Girtinesque period and the best of his early oil pictures—the works, in fact, which made his first fame, and raised him to the rank of Academician—have appeared here and there in sale-rooms, and at exhibitions of deceased masters. The Winter Exhibition of 1887 at Burlington House contained some of the finest of the drawings. There was the *Norham Castle* of 1798, the *Bridge over the Usk* and *The Abbey Pool* of 1799, the *Fonthill* of 1800, and the *Edinburgh* and *Kilchurn Castle* of 1802. Of these none is nobler, nor now in better condition, than *The Abbey Pool.* The *Fonthill* has become 'foxy;' but all of them have a breadth and simplicity which is seldom found in his later work. The *Kilchurn* is, as Mr. Hamerton says, in regard to the liberties it takes with Nature, 'a Turner, and nothing but a Turner;' but it is a Turner modified in feeling and style by the example of Girtin.

The *Norham Castle* is the most celebrated.

It was repeated in the 'Liber Studiorum' and the 'Rivers of England;' and it was to this drawing that Turner referred many years after, when, while making sketches for 'Provincial Antiquities and Picturesque Scenery of Scotland, with Descriptive Illustrations by Sir Walter Scott, 1826,' he one day took off his hat to Norham Castle, and Cadell, the publisher, who was with him, expressed surprise. 'Oh!' said Turner, 'I made a drawing or painting of Norham several years since. It took; and from that day to this I have had as much to do as my hands could execute.' Probably the effect of the sun behind the solemn bulk of mound and ruin, their outlines blurred with light, grand and indistinct against the morning sky, and the watery foreground rich with varied reflections, gave the drawing the charm of novelty as well as beauty. Yet this class of effect appears to have been first attempted, not by Turner, but by Girtin; for it is reported of the latter that one day he had—

'Sketched a picturesque part of an ancient town. He drew the outline at broad day, and had purposed to colour the scene as it then appeared; but in passing near the spot at the going down of the sun, and perceiving the buildings under the influence of twilight had assumed so unexpected a mass of shadow in the fading light of the sky, and that the reflections in the water still increased the vastness of the mass; moreover, that the arches of a bridge opposed their distinct forms, dark also, to a bright gleam on the horizon; he was so possessed with the solemn grandeur of the composition, which had gained so much in sentiment by the change of light, that he determined to make an attempt at imitation, and by ardent application accomplished the object.'[1]

This anecdote belongs to the earlier part of Girtin's career, for the writer adds: 'This piece was wrought with bold and masterly execution, and led to that daring style of effect which he subsequently practised with so much success.'

So far then, and no farther at present, can we trace Turner's career, leaving him still the disciple of Girtin, but yet, as it were, passing even Girtin by, as he passed so many others, to a greater future of his own. Much must be left unsaid of Girtin, of his influence on Turner,

[1] 'Somerset House Gazette,' i. 81.

and his great part in the development of water-colour painting in both *technique* and feeling. If in comparing the two artists it may seem to some that I have weighted the balance in favour of Girtin, I may plead at least that Turner can afford it, for if the whole of Turner's work down to 1803 were abolished, and the memory of it destroyed, his fame would scarcely be prejudiced one tittle; but all I have written is but a feather's weight in comparison with the following few lines from Mr. Ruskin, which, by the kindness of Mr. Francis Pierrepoint Barnard, I am allowed to print:—

'BRANTWOOD, CONISTON, LANCASHIRE.
'*16th June*, 1887.

'DEAR SIR,—

'I have the deepest and the fondest regard for your great-grandfather's work, holding it to be entirely authoritative and faultless as a type, not only of pure water-colour execution, but of pure artistic feeling and insight into what is noblest and capable of enduring dignity in familiar subjects. He is often as impressive to me as Nature herself; nor do I doubt that Turner owed more to his teaching and companionship than to his own genius in the first years of his life.

'Believe me,

'Your faithful Servant,

'JOHN RUSKIN.'

It has been possible hitherto to trace with more or less accuracy the successive stages by which water-colour painting was raised to a distinct branch of art, but after this result had once been finally attained by the united efforts of Girtin and Turner the road is no longer single and straight. 'Power, brilliancy, and truth, were so evidently the result of the new manner,' wrote the late Richard Redgrave, 'that it soon superseded the old one.' Every one now 'had the seed,' and the result was, that nearly all the band of clever and enthusiastic young artists who gathered at Dr. Monro's, and many others also, began to find a means to express their individuality and to interpret Nature in their own way. It is astonishing how much alike the early work of many of these artists is, and how soon after the change in method was accomplished each began to assert his personality. They soon formed a real and original school of landscape, and also to feel their strength as a body. The result was the foundation of 'The

Society of Painters in Water-Colours' which held its first Exhibition in April, 1805, at rooms in Lower Brook Street, Grosvenor Square. The original members of this (now Royal) Society were:—G. Barret, J. Cristall, W. S. Gilpin, J. Glover, W. Havell, R. Hills, J. Holworthy, J. C. Nattes, F. Nicholson, N. Pocock, W. H. Pyne, S. Rigaud, S. Shelley, J. Varley, C. Varley, W. F. Wells. It is evident that in treating a large body of men all engaged in developing the resources of the same art, all starting at about the same point at about the same time, though of different ages, it is impossible to observe anything like a strict chronological order.

'The growth of the art,' wrote the late Mr. Richard Redgrave, 'after the foundation of the new Society and the opening of their separate exhibition, was rapid and steady, and improvements in execution were continuous. The new mode of treatment once adopted, many minor excellences speedily followed. It is asserted on competent authority that some of the principal of these were due to the genius of Turner. The mode of taking out lights, for instance, from the masses of local colour by means of bread is undoubtedly due to him

and is said to have had a startling effect on his contemporaries when works so treated were first exhibited. Washing, in order to obtain a granulated surface, practised so largely by Robson and others; stippling, carried to excess by the cattle-painter, Hills, but of great value when applied with discretion and not in excess, and many other varied executive processes, were introduced within a few years after the foundation of the new Society, and if not all due to Turner were certainly incorporated most successfully into his bold and liberal practice.' —*Catalogue of Water-colour Paintings in the National Gallery.*

The order in which we now take the more celebrated of the water-colour artists who flourished in the first quarter of the present century is of comparatively little importance, but the name of François Louis Thomas Francia (1772–1839) will at least afford a link between the old and new, for he was a member of that early Sketching Society formed by Girtin, of which mention has already been made, and he was afterwards a member of the Water-Colour Society. The share he had in the development of the school is difficult to estimate, but it seems probable that it was larger than is

generally supposed. He was certainly an artist of great natural gifts, and the senior of Girtin by about three years. A Frenchman by birth; he was born at Calais, December 21, 1772, but early in life he settled in London and began to exhibit at the Royal Academy in 1795. In that year and the following twenty-six he exhibited eighty-five pictures, or drawings, at Somerset House. For some time he was Secretary of the Water-Colour Society, and was painter in water-colours to the Duchess of York. In 1816 he was an unsuccessful candidate for an Associateship of the Royal Academy, and in the following year he returned to Calais, where he died in 1839. This is nearly all that is recorded of Francia. His drawings are not often to be met with, and he was either a small producer or his works have been sold for those of other artists. Some of them bear a strong resemblance to those of Girtin. His subjects were mostly of coast scenes with shipping, of which he was an

admirable draughtsman. There are several in the South Kensington Museum, ranging from 1799 to 1827, all worthy of study, and some remarkable for their fine colour and poetical feeling. In the British Museum, also, he is represented by some very interesting drawings once belonging to Mr. Henderson. Two are masterly sketches in monochrome on grey paper, heightened with white; others are small and very refined studies of tone in pencil. Another in full but delicate colour, more like a Turner than a Girtin, is a shore scene at Calais on a breezy day, the sun shining in fitful gleams through a light sky upon the pearly, dancing waves. If it cannot be said of Francia that he was a great genius, he was certainly an artist of rare taste, refinement, and skill, and a true student of nature, who deserves a very honourable place among the masters of his school.

It is probable that Francia had no little share in the development of Richard Parkes Bonington (1801–1828), to whom at least the name of

COAST SCENE. *By F. L. T. Francia.*

genius should not be denied. He spent most of his life in France, and the greatness of his merit has not till recently been fully understood in England. It was ignorance rather than want of taste that has made England (in the words of M. Chesneau) 'too lightly yield to France the glory of this young genius.' It is true that Mr. Ruskin, in a note to this passage has said that 'if the young genius had learned the first rules of perspective, and never seen either Paris or Venice, it had been extremely better for him;' but this is a hard saying, difficult of proof, and need not interfere with our appreciation of those beautiful drawings of French architecture and exquisite pictures of Italian light and colour which he managed to execute during the few years of his life.

It is one of the most remarkable facts about Bonington that, though he received his art-education in France, there is little that is French about his art. This would be still more remarkable if we accepted without qualifi-

cation the statement of M. Chesneau that he studied in the French Schools from the age of fifteen. He is known to have studied at the Louvre at this time, but that is not quite the same thing, especially as he was then copying pictures in water-colours with a skill which surprised Delacroix. This water-colour art he could not have learnt in the French Schools. He learnt it from Francia, who learnt it in England; so that the base of his art-education must have been English. He afterwards became a pupil at the Institute, and drew for a while in the *atelier* of Baron Gros; but his art was never Gallicised, but remained both in colour and sentiment entirely English. Though he was but a youth, it was not the French School which influenced him, but he that influenced the French School. His works have no affinity with those of any French artist who could have been his master; but they have a very strong affinity with those of many English artists — with Girtin's, and Francia's, and

Turner's, and Copley Fielding's, and Collins'. When you see a fine drawing or picture which reminds you of one of these artists, but 'with a difference,' it is very likely to be a Bonington; but a drawing by Bonington will never be mistaken for that of any artist of the French School; and when in 1826 he exhibited for the first time in England, his pictures (they were of the French coast and exhibited at the British Institution) were said to be the work of Collins, one of the most distinctly British of all painters. He seems to me to belong not only to the English School, but to the specially English section of it—the water-colour section; for though he painted in oils, he did not do so till 1824 or 1825 (three or four years before his death), and his oil pictures aim at the pure colour and luminous qualities of water-colour. Yet historically he is more important in relation to France than England. He may be regarded as an offset of the English School planted in France, whose life was spent in developing, not the art of his native country,

but that of the land in which he resided. Constable was no doubt the most potent foreign force in the foundation of the modern French school of landscape; but Bonington may be said to have led the way to the triumph of English landscape art at the Salon of 1824, when Constable, Copley Fielding, and he were all awarded medals. It should be remembered that some years before this Bonington had won a reputation in Paris. He had sketched on the Seine, as Turner had sketched on the Thames; and the novelty and beauty of his water-colour drawings had from the first procured them a ready sale. In 1822 he had exhibited at the Salon, and obtained a premium from the Société des Amis des Arts. Moreover, in France, as in England, there was topographical drawing to do, and no one did it so picturesquely as Bonington. His finest work of this kind is to be found among the lithographs of Baron Taylor's 'Voyage Pittoresque dans l'ancienne France.'

It was probably about 1825 that Bonington

went to Italy, where he made a number of sketches in Venice, Bologna, and elsewhere, remarkable for their pure bright colour and masterly execution. Between this visit and his death in 1828, he painted his greatest pictures in oil. Among his contributions to the Salon of 1827 were two grand views of Venice and two celebrated scenes from French history—*Francis I. and the Queen of Navarre*, and *Henry III. receiving the Spanish Ambassador*, the last of which was bought by the late Lord Hertford at Lord Seymour's sale in Paris for 49,000 francs; and if only to show that the high merit of his pictures is now recognised in his native country, it may be mentioned that at the 'Novar' sale at Christie's, in 1878, *The Fish Market, Boulogne* and *The Grand Canal, Venice*, brought £3,500 a-piece. The latter and the *Henry III.* were at the Royal Academy in 1828, but he died in the same year, and what effect they produced soon passed away. Since then it may be urged that there have been few opportunities for the British public to become

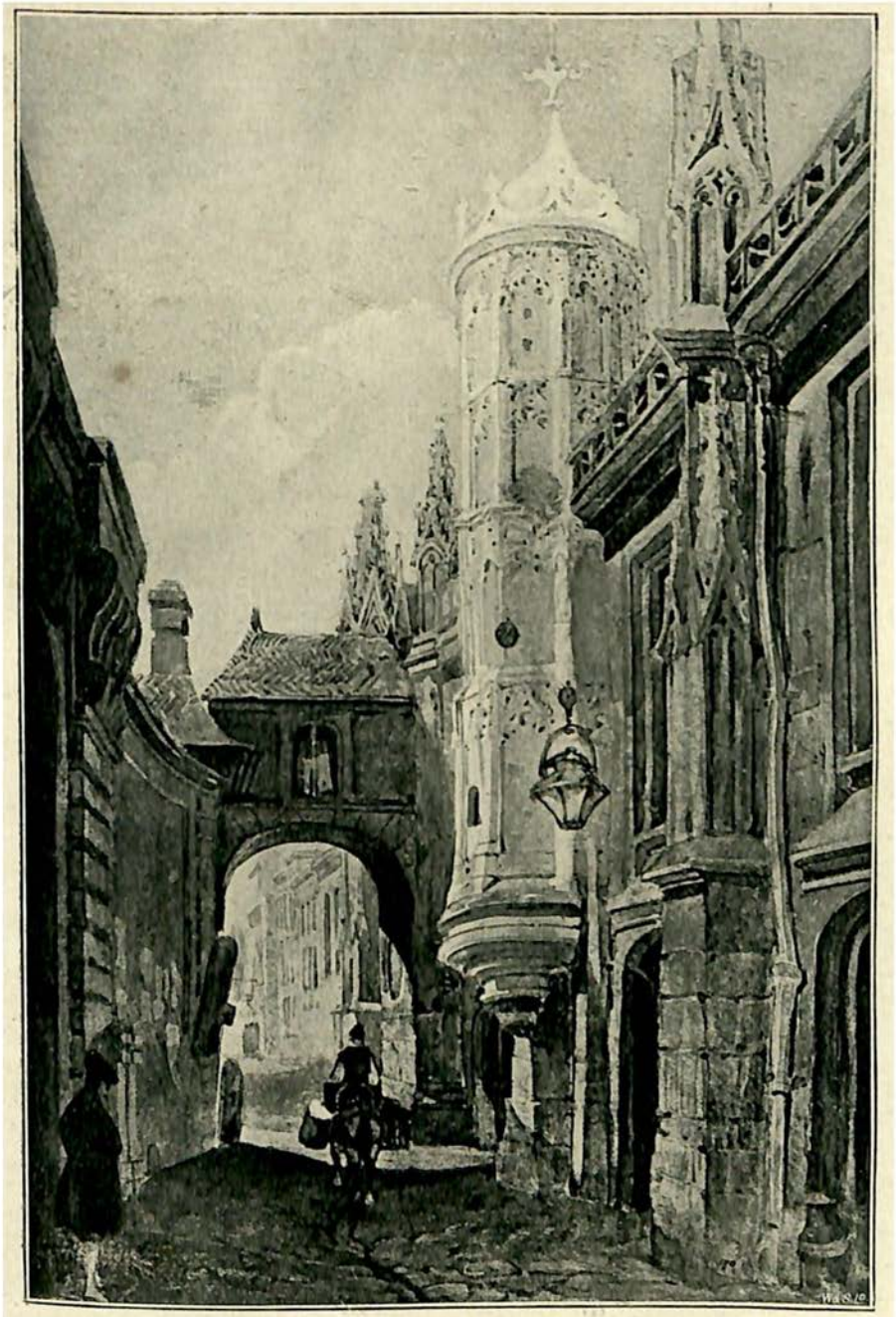
acquainted with the rare quality of his work. He is poorly represented in all our national collections, though there is a very interesting sketch-book and some brilliant, but slight, drawings by him in the British Museum. If his early death and the circumstances of his life have prevented him from taking any very eminent place in our art-history, his rank is among the best, whether he be considered as a painter in water-colour or a painter in oils. Such rank must, however grudgingly, be at last awarded him, if we mean by 'best' choiceness of gift rather than quantity of achievement.

If Bonington was the pupil of Francia, John Sell Cotman (1782–1842) was his fellow-student and a fellow-member of Girtin's Sketching Society. He was born at Norwich, and lived there and at Yarmouth for many years of his life, and is regarded generally as one of the so-called 'Norwich School.' Nevertheless, in his education and practice he belongs rather to London, and his true masters were Turner and

Girtin rather than John Crome (1768–1821). The name of the latter artist should not, however, be forgotten in connexion with Cotman, nor yet in connexion with water-colour art, for Crome practised the latter with much skill as a sketcher, using it mainly for studies from Nature. In this, as in the practice of etching for the same purpose, he seems to have been self-directed, and though his water-colours are slight and weak in colour, they are distinguished by a breadth of treatment and a painter's feeling, which, in his case, can scarcely be traced to the example of any then living artist. Cotman, however, came to London when about sixteen or seventeen, and made the acquaintance of Turner, Girtin, De Wint, and others of the group of artists who met at Dr. Monro's. The engraving, after his drawing of the church of St. Mary Redcliffe at Bristol (here reproduced) shows a feeling in the treatment of his subject not unlike that of Girtin as displayed in the latter artist's drawing of Bridgnorth; but in Cotman's

case perhaps more than that of others the influence of Turner and Girtin is equally balanced, both contributing to the formation of his own marked individuality as an artist. He had specially that love of largeness and breadth which was one of the characteristics of Girtin, but his colour is often very like that of Turner; and his feeling for elegance of form and for classic and romantic sentiment in composition, shows that his imagination was affected, as Turner's was, by poetic ideals of landscape art. This appears most plainly, perhaps, in some of the plates of his 'Liber Studiorum,' a small book of soft etchings, varied in style and feeling, which he published in 1838; but others of them may be viewed rather as examples of his picturesque interpretation of familiar scenes, and of that breadth of treatment already mentioned.

He had not indeed much time in his busy life to cultivate the more imaginative side of his genius. In 1807 he returned to Norwich, and set up as a drawing-master and artist, painting



COVERED PORTAL TO A CHURCH. *By J. S. Cotman.*

portraits as well as landscapes. He married early, and his increasing family made great calls upon his industry. Those were not days when a water-colour artist could command high prices; and his drawing lessons were his principal source of income, notwithstanding that his production of original work was enormous. In 1808 the Norwich Exhibition contained no less than sixty-seven of his works. Another source of income was found, after a few years, in the publication by subscription of etchings of architecture. It is probable that work of this kind was more congenial to him than to most artists of imagination; for he had a distinct taste for 'antiquities,' and a feeling for the picturesque qualities of Gothic architecture. His first volume was published in 1811, and consisted of twenty-four plates of ancient buildings in various parts of England. Then came 'Specimens of Norman and Gothic Architecture in the County of Norfolk' (1817), 'A Series of Etchings illustrative of the Architectural Antiquities of Norfolk'

(1818), and 'Engravings of the most remarkable of the Sepulchral Brasses of Norfolk' (1819). In 1822 was published 'Architectural Antiquities of Normandy,' with letterpress by his friend and patron Dawson Turner. A large portion of his working life for many years must have been devoted to these etchings, which are executed in a free and masterly manner, somewhat in the style of Piranesi, whom he took for a model.

In 1825 Cotman was elected an Associate of the Water-Colour Society, and from this year till 1839 he was a constant contributor to their exhibitions, sending views of France and Norfolk, landscapes and sketches of figures; and in 1834 he obtained, greatly through the persistent championship of Turner, the post of drawing-master to King's College, London.

Of the art of Cotman and his influence on the water-colour school, it is difficult even yet to say the last word, and scarcely the first would have been spoken if it were not for Mr. Wedmore in one of the most careful of his 'Studies in

English Art.' To me he seems to have never completely expressed himself as a landscape-painter, being hindered by the quantity of his architectural works, his duties as a teacher, and, lastly, the very variety of his sympathy for both Nature and art. It can certainly be said of him that he was a first-rate draughtsman of architecture and shipping, and a fine and original colourist. Mr. Wedmore notices the Norman journeys as a 'marked changing time for Cotman,' when 'he became possessed with the wish to have more of composition in his work;' he notes, from 1808 to 1818, a change from sober browns to 'goodly yellows, not violent but golden,' and then 'to the golden yellows that are of his own and Norfolk, Cotman adds,' as in a drawing of a castle in Normandy, 'blues that are pure and exquisite, liquid and intense. And he weds them so in this Norman landscape of towering castle and sleeping water—they are such full chords, making such profound harmonies that one thinks he must have been to Venice in his dreams

and seen Giorgione.' His colour is, however, often unpleasantly hot.

Lastly, it may be said that though his drawings and pictures (and he executed several fine pictures in oil [1]) differ greatly in style and feeling, and also in merit, they are nearly always remarkable for largeness of design and breadth of light and colour. His great fear seems to have been to render his subject poor and undignified by too numerous divisions and overwork. It was his principle to 'leave out, but add nothing,' and he 'left out' with great daring, sometimes carrying simplicity almost to baldness, especially in his clouds and wall spaces, which have often only sufficient detail to suggest substance and form. He sought for the same merit in his colour, preserving pure and unbroken the prevalent hue of his masses. In this characteristic he may be regarded with Francia and Bonington as an artistic descendant of Girtin.

[1] There are two in the National Gallery, one a very fine seapiece

VII.

FIGURE PAINTERS: STOTHARD, BLAKE, CATTERMOLE, &c.

THE practice of water-colour painting has had so much greater influence upon landscape than upon figure-painting, that I have hitherto said little about the latter. The peculiar qualities of transparent water-colour upon paper —the ground that permeates the colour like light, the absorbent character of paper which favours infinite gradation and perfect fusion of tint, the surface which can be altered in texture by skilful manipulation—all these are favourable for the rendering of atmospheric effects so subtle and complicated that oil can only approach them with difficulty, and with a sacrifice

of its special qualities. In figure-painting these properties of transparent water-colour are not of the same relative value. Force, solidity, and precision, are of the first importance in figure-painting (or, at least, were so regarded at the time of which I write), and these could be attained with greater facility in oil. In executing works of large size oil has also manifest advantages; and though latterly Mr. Burne-Jones, M. Meissonier, Professor Herkomer, and other artists of distinction, have produced large figure pictures in water-colour, the attempts have been rare, and complete success, as in the case of the first named, has only been achieved by the use of strong opaque pigments, which have almost the force and solidity of oil colours.[1]

Yet there are figure subjects of a certain class and size in which the peculiar properties of pure

[1] One of Mr. Burne-Jones most celebrated works, *Love among the Ruins*, has recently been destroyed by being sponged with warm water because it was mistaken for an oil picture.

water-colour tell. In miniature portraits, for instance, where the extreme refinements of clear and pearly complexion, or the inner light of the brightest eye, are to be represented 'in small.' It would have taxed the power of Van Eyck himself to have produced the effect of a fine Cosway. In small genre subjects, where delicacy is more important than strength, water at least will hold its own with oil; and not to speak of its value for sketching purposes, its brightness and purity will always favour its employment for small designs of a decorative character.

Genre painting in water-colour is, however, a comparatively recent development; and the earlier English water-colourists who attempted figure subjects did not, as a rule, get beyond what may more properly be called coloured drawings than pictures. The roll of these, as compared to that of the landscape-painters, is a small one; but since the days of Paul Sandby, to go no farther back, it has never been empty. During the latter half of the eighteenth century,

semi-classical compositions in the elegant manner of Cipriani were fashionable among amateurs as well as professionals; and scenes of more or less fancy genre in the manner of Gainsborough, Watteau, and more affected artists, were produced in numbers. The works of English lyric and idyllic poets—especially Thomson, Blair, and Beattie—supplied the sentiment and often the subject of many others. Nor were more dramatic and severer subjects neglected. Shakespeare, Chaucer, Spenser, and even the Bible, inspired these designers; and it may be said that there was no side of English art from the 'High Art' of Barry and Fuseli to the pastorals of Morland that was not reflected in small by artists who used washes of water-colour to shade and tint their designs. Viewed in relation to the progress of water-colour painting these works were for the most part like the drawings of the landscape 'draughtsman'—they were monochromes or monochromes tinted—and it would be impossible here even to mention all of the artists who at

this (as at all other periods) used water-colour in this manner. The line and the wash are not of less use in one kind of design than another, and have been employed not only by painters, but by sculptors and engravers. No one, perhaps, ever used them with more dexterity than Flaxman; but this is not the place to treat his genius. For much the same reason no due review of the merits of the book-illustrators as such can be given here, though most, perhaps all of them, used water-colour in preparing their designs for the engraver; nor yet of the caricaturists, though at least one of them, Thomas Rowlandson (1756–1827), used the brush with much skill.

Yet it is impossible without regret to pass over so lightly those hundreds of designs which during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, and the first quarter of this, illustrated nearly every British poet and novelist, and many a foreign and classic author besides. If the history of design in England be ever written, the book-

illustrator will assume a more prominent place than is usually assigned to him. A great deal of what is strongest, most living, and most national, in English art lies between the covers of books. In the history of modern painting our portrait-painters and our landscape-painters more than hold their own against those of other nations, but the same can scarcely be said of our classical and historical painters. It is not in our galleries, but in our books, that we must seek for this kind of strength. Can any nation produce anything to excel, or even to parallel, Flaxman's designs to Homer, Stothard's to the 'Pilgrim's Progress,' or Blake's to 'Job'? Nay, if we take the illustrators of novels, from Stothard to Cruikshank, are there many painters who can compare with them in beauty and force of design, in fertility of invention, in expression, in passion; in a word, in the most intellectual and spiritual qualities of art?

But water-colour painting is the present theme, and I can only take account of a few of those

designers who illustrate the progress of the art. It commenced, as has been indicated, in the colouring of designs drawn with pen or pencil, and the most popular subjects were those which are so well known from the engravings of Bartolozzi and his school — graceful semi-classical allegories of Cupids and Nymphs, Gods and Goddesses, Fauns and Satyrs, or elegant pastorals of Daphnis and Chloe, Strephon and Urania. It was a fashion in the service of which all artists — amateur and professional, painters in oil as well as painters in water-colour — were engaged; but the introducer of it, or, at least, the greatest stimulator of it, in England, was Giovanni Battista Cipriani, R.A. (1727–1785), an Italian, who came to England with Sir William Chambers and Wilton, the sculptor, in 1755, and remained there, producing numberless drawings full of elegance and graceful invention, until his death. Cipriani, his friend Bartolozzi (an elegant designer as well as a fine engraver), and Angelica Kauffmann, the leaders

of this school, were all foreigners; but a once celebrated designer of this class was an Englishwoman, an amateur of birth and distinction—Lady Diana, or as she was usually called, Lady Di Beauclerk (1734–1808). She was the eldest daughter of Charles Spencer, second Duke of Marlborough, was married first in 1757 to Frederick St. John, second Viscount Bolingbroke, from whom she was divorced in 1768; and secondly, two days after her divorce, to Topham Beauclerk. Her most important work was the illustration of Dryden's 'Fables,' published by Bensley in 1797, but she also illustrated the Hon. W. R. Spencer's translation of Bürger's 'Leonora,' and produced many pretty designs of amorini, &c., which were engraved by Bartolozzi. Sir Joshua Reynolds is reported to have said that 'many of her ladyship's drawings might be studied as models;' and the estimation in which her grace, fancy, and skill, were held in her day, though exaggerated perhaps, was not without justification, as is sufficiently proved by Barto-

lozzi's engravings, and a large and elegant drawing—*Group of Gipsies and Female Rustics*—now in the South Kensington Museum. Horace Walpole speaks of her designs in terms of unbounded admiration. Her first attempt in the art of illustration consisted of seven designs 'in sut-water' for his 'Mysterious Mother.' To these he devoted a closet at Strawberry Hill, christened 'The Beauclerk Closet,' where they hung on Indian blue damask. He wrote, 'Salvator Rosa and Guido could not surpass their expression and beauty.' This was from Horace Walpole perhaps the highest measure of praise, and he calls them in other passages 'incomparable' and 'sublime.'

Another large coloured drawing at South Kensington, which is a good illustration of the style and poetical sentiment of the time, is *The Sybarite*, by John Downman, A.R.A., dated 1805, an illustration of a poem by Isaac D'Israeli. It shows a great deal of skill in the use of water-colour for tinting on a large scale. Downman's

designs of this character are not strong, but they have the pleasing elegance which was in vogue in his time; and he was reckoned of sufficient importance by Boydell to receive a commission to paint *Rosalind giving the Chain to Orlando*, for the Shakespeare Gallery. His chief excellence lay, however, in his portraits, mostly profiles in pencil tinted. Downman died in 1824, but the date of his birth is not recorded. He belongs to a large class of artists whose mainstay was portrait, but who from time to time, with more or less success, essayed domestic subjects and illustrations of the poets. One of these was Thomas Heaphy (1775–1835), a man of much talent, whose small portraits in water-colours were beautifully executed and sometimes set in highly finished landscapes. He appears to have been of a restless disposition. The son of a dyer, he commenced life as an engraver. He then took to portrait-painting and joined the Water-Colour Society in 1807, but he left it after a few years. He visited the British

camp in the Peninsula and painted portraits of the officers; and on his return founded the Society of British Artists, of which he was the first President. Then he went to Italy, and when he came back formed a new Water-Colour Society, which appears to have had but a short life. His works are seldom mentioned, but those which I have seen are very skilful, highly finished, and rich in colour. There are two drawings by him in the South Kensington Museum, one of which is a clever genre composition called *The Wounded Leg*, or *The Village Doctress*. His most celebrated work was a drawing of *Hastings Fish Market*, which was exhibited in 1809 and sold for 500 guineas, a sum then unprecedented in the history of water-colours. Heaphy was portrait-painter to the Prince of Wales, afterwards George IV.

No such distinction befell Joshua Cristall (1767–1847), one of the earliest of our water-colour artists who depicted genre subjects, perhaps the first to do so in a purely simple and

natural manner. He was also, perhaps, the first who can be said to have 'painted' such subjects in water-colour. In the South Kensington Museum are several of his works, including a large composition wrought throughout in colour, full of figures well drawn, and evidently the result of careful study from life. The subject is the same as that of Heaphy's masterpiece, viz., the Fish Market at Hastings. Cristall was the son of a Cornish sailor, the master of a small trading vessel, and began life as a china-painter under Turner (the potter), at Burslem. His earlier works are classical in subject. He was one of the foundation members of the Water-Colour Society in 1805, and its first President after its reconstruction in 1821. In the British Museum are a few drawings by this manly, original, and unaffected artist, who may be regarded as the founder of the English School of Water-Colour genre. He was not so great a colourist as Cattermole, but he laid on his colour boldly and freely like a painter, not as a mere auxi-

liary to his outline. Nothing can be more direct or simple than his method.

Cristall's execution was more solid, his sense of light and air more realised, and his colour fuller, than Wheatley's. He was also much more unaffected; but Wheatley had a slight prettiness, and a true, if somewhat insipid, grace of his own, which made his little rustic scenes and domestic dramas popular in his day, and preserve them from being wholly uninteresting now. Francis Wheatley (1747–1801) was, however, chiefly a painter in oils, and these remarks apply mainly to his water-colours, the subjects of which, to quote Mr. Wedmore's happy words, were the 'Ophelias and Mirandas of a beatified peasantry.' 'They are mostly drawn with the pen, the shadows washed with Indian ink, and the whole slightly tinted,' but it is often very difficult to draw the line where tinting ends and painting begins, and sometimes in drawings which were intended only for the engraver there are more traces of a painter's feeling than in more am-

bitious performances intended for exhibition as pictures. If this is the case with some of Wheatley's drawings, it is still more so with those of an artist who was only known as an engraver, and only used colour in tiny studies and drawings made for translation by himself into black and white. This was Thomas Bewick (1753–1828), the celebrated wood-engraver and designer, one of the most thoroughly original and English of British artists. As far as the public is concerned, his skill in the use of water-colours is a comparatively recent discovery, dating from an exhibition at the Fine Art Society in 1881; but the gift by Miss Isabella Bewick, in 1882, to the British Museum of a number of his original drawings has put it into the power of every one to study it. The gift comprises many beautiful drawings of feathers—studies of colour, form, and texture, not only very faithful, but showing wonderful skill and resource in the use of his materials. Of the first excellence are the studies of the plumage

of the bustard, and the completed drawings of the robin, the blackbird, and the thrush. The most precious of these little gems are, however, the designs for many of the well-known tail-pieces; in monochrome some, others tinted. They often contain beautiful little landscape backgrounds, full of light and air, and truly suggestive and harmonious, if not complete, in colour. One of the finest in execution is the fisherman with bent rod, relieved against a background of rock and foliage, and all lovers of Bewick's cuts will find some of their favourites here increased in charm. The man holding on to the cow's tail in the river, the skating scene, the monkey turning the spit, the gulls sitting on the rising wave, the man and the packhorse, the old woman and the swarm of bees, the boys riding on tombstones, the man hanging on a tree—these, and many more as good, are to be seen in the Print Room of the British Museum, and quite entitle Bewick to a place among the earlier English painters in water-colour.

One at least of Bewick's pupils is also worthy of mention in connexion with water-colour. Poor Luke Clennell (1781–1840), the admirable wood-engraver and spirited illustrator of Fielding and Smollett, whose drawings for 'The British Novelists' are in the Art Library of South Kensington, was a very gifted artist, and used water-colour with great skill. In the British Museum is a portrait of Sir Wm. Domville, Bart., in pencil, the flesh-tints excellently touched in colour, and at South Kensington is a very clever drawing of a saw-pit. His most important work was a sketch of the *Charge of the Life Guards at Waterloo*, which gained the premium of 150 guineas offered by the British Institution. A few years afterwards (1817) his mind gave way just when full employment and fame seemed to be assured to him.

Of other 'book-illustrators' the only ones who can be mentioned here are the greatest of all, Stothard and Blake. Though, perhaps, neither of them had any great influence on the more

modern school of water-colour painting, they were not only fine designers, but fine colourists, and both used water-colours with singular skill and a clear sense of the peculiar qualities of their materials. Thomas Stothard, R.A. (1755–1834), began life as an apprentice to a draughtsman of patterns for brocaded silks, and thus had early opportunities of acquiring skill in the decorative arrangement of colour and the use of a water-colourist's materials. He employed his leisure in making designs in illustration of the poets, and some of them having attracted the attention of Mr. Harrison, the proprietor of the 'Novelists' Magazine,' he was encouraged to pursue this line of art, although he does not appear to have been regularly employed on the Magazine till July, 1780. He entered the schools of the Royal Academy in 1777, and began to exhibit there in 1778 with a *Holy Family*, but after that his contributions were chiefly illustrations of the poets and novelists. It is probable that most of these were in oil, but some

at least were in water-colour, and, in 1781 and 1782, consisted of his designs for the Poetical and Novelists' Magazines.

It is unnecessary here to enumerate these and the hundreds of other 'book-illustrations' which he produced in his long life. Who does not know the grace and spirit of them, their beautiful composition, their gentle humour, their unfailing taste? Who among those who care for the art of their country do not at least possess a few of them, from 'Peregrine Pickle' or 'Clarissa Harlowe;' from 'Tristram Shandy' or 'Sir Charles Grandison;' from the 'Pilgrim's Progress' or the 'Spectator;' from Spenser or Boccaccio? In designing for the engraver Stothard habitually used water-colours; sometimes the drawings were in Indian ink, but often they were coloured with singular sweetness and richness, in hues bright and pure as his own spirit, and in sympathy with the gay and tender subjects in which he most delighted. In the British Museum there is a drawing of his (probably from Boccaccio) in

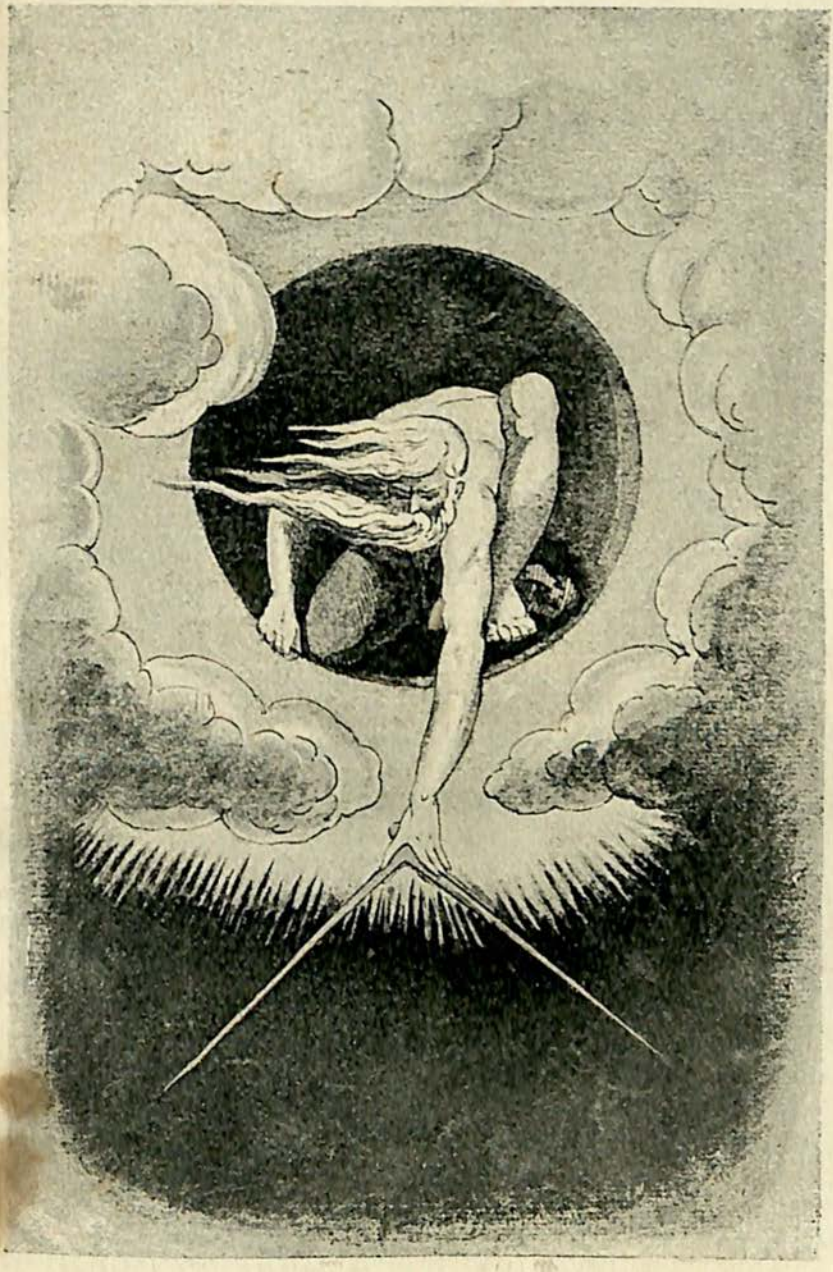
which fair ladies in gay dresses are plucking flowers in a garden—a perfect bouquet itself of sweet forms and colours.

If Stothard's use of colour was decorative and symbolical, still more was that of William Blake (1757–1827), who received his first training as an artist from the formal hand of James Basire, the engraver, and employed the first years of his professional life chiefly in interpreting the designs of others. But he engraved his own designs also, including one (in 1773), which bore the mystic title of *'Joseph of Arimathæa among the Rocks of Albion.* Between 1779 and 1783 he engraved many book-illustrations, most of them after Stothard, whose sweet and flowing pencil was a strange contrast to his own. It was in 1788 that he completed the 'Songs of Innocence,' the first of those celebrated books of his in which text and decoration and design were all combined on one plate, bitten with acid, so that the lines and letters stood out in relief. The process was revealed to him, he said, by his deceased brother,

When the impressions had been taken from the plates they were coloured by the hands of himself and his wife. Poetry, design, and colour have, perhaps, never been so harmoniously combined. It is hard to speak of one without the others, but there is not much left to be said of Blake either as a poet, an engraver, or a colourist. Though neglected in his life, except by a few devoted friends like Flaxman and Linnell, full justice has been done to him of recent years, and his works are treasured by all who care for what is spiritual in design. Nearly all have been reproduced in facsimile. In a note to Gilchrist's life of the artist the late Dante Rossetti thus speaks of his designs and their colour :—

'Given without the colour they cannot be said to embody Blake's intention in producing them. Much which may here seem unaccountably rugged and incomplete is softened by the sweet liquid rainbow tints of the coloured copies into a mysterious brilliancy, which could never have been obtained over a first printing of a neater or more exact kind, body colour as well as transparent colour being used in the finishing.'

These 'sweet liquid rainbow tints,' 'prismatic



THE ANCIENT OF DAYS SETTING A COMPASS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH. *By W. Blake.*

and ethereal,' as some one else has called them; this 'mysterious brilliancy,' used with great decorative skill, and in perfect spiritual sympathy with the elementary ideas of terror, purity, hope, despair, love, and triumph, which inspired the designs, separate Blake's colour from that of ordinary men, as much as his life and genius were so separated. How completely colour was a language to him is shown in all his works in which it is employed, from the early and universally attractive 'Songs of Innocence and Experience' to the 'Book of the Thel' (1789), the 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell' (1790), and the late cryptic Prophetic Books, such as 'Jerusalem' and 'Milton.' As a masterpiece of imaginative colour nothing can be finer than the *Leviathan* in the 'Marriage of Heaven and Hell,' which has been well produced in Mr. Swinburne's 'William Blake, a Critical Essay.'

Blake also painted in tempera, and in what he called fresco, 'water-colour on a plaster ground of glue and whiting laid on to canvas or board;'

and so far as the decorative and symbolical use of water-colour is concerned he may be said to have surpassed all others. One of his simplest and grandest designs is repeated here, *The Ancient of Days setting a Compass on the face of the Earth.*

Notwithstanding, however, the sweetness and purity of Stothard's colouring, and the decorative splendour and spiritual suggestiveness of Blake's, their coloured works come rather within the definition of 'coloured drawings' than paintings, and it was reserved for Bonington and Cattermole to surpass the efforts of such men as Wheatley and Cristall, and to show the power of water-colour to depict scenes from human life with a richness of colour and a truth of illumination that had not been attained by it before. Of Bonington so much has already been said that it only remains to be noticed that he used water-colours as well as oils for his gemlike little figure subjects, of which one is reproduced here from a charming sketch in the British Museum. Fine

A Group. *By R. P. Bonington.*

as his work was, he had nothing like the same influence on British art as George Cattermole (1800–1868), who was born about the same time as Bonington, and lived for forty years after him. Before Cattermole's time those water-colour painters who attempted "historical" subjects were content to reflect the movement of what was to them the world above—the Academy, with its ranks of oil painters; but Cattermole took a fresh departure. He founded a genre—historical and romantic genre—which endeavours to restore to us the life of former days. He was born at Diss, in Norfolk, the youngest son of a father of independent means, and was placed, at the age of fourteen, with John Britton, the architectural draughtsman and antiquary, for whose grand work on the 'Cathedral Antiquities of England' he made some drawings. He commenced in 1819 to exhibit at the Royal Academy, and in 1826 he sent a drawing or picture of *King Henry discovering the Relics of King Arthur in Glastonbury*

Abbey, and next year another of *The Trial of Queen Catherine*. Whether these were in oil or water-colour does not appear, but after this he ceased to exhibit at the Royal Academy. In 1822 he had joined the Water-Colour Society as an Associate Exhibitor, of which he became a full member in 1833; and from 1827 to his withdrawal from the Society in 1850, he devoted himself almost exclusively to painting in water-colours. The drawing of which a reproduction is given, is a characteristic specimen of his style and choice of subjects, a scene from old monastic life which gave him scope for the indulgence of his unusual power of composition, colour, and chiaroscuro, and of his love for the picturesque in architecture and costume. This drawing, an excellent example of Cattermole's art, forms part of the bequest of Mr. Henderson to the National Gallery,[1] which includes many drawings remarkable for their powerful handling and Venetian depth and richness of colour.

[1] Now lent to South Kensington Museum.

A Scene of Monastic Life. *By G. Cattermole.*

Mr. Ruskin wrote of Cattermole, in the first volume of 'Modern Painters: There are signs in George Cattermole's works of very peculiar gifts, and perhaps, also, of powerful genius. . . . The antiquarian feeling of Cattermole is pure, earnest, and natural, and I think his imagination originally vigorous; certainly his fancy, his grasp of momentary passion, considerable; his sense of action in the human body, vivid and ready.' A careful study of Cattermole's works will confirm every word of this praise, and I see no reason to alter the opinions which I have expressed elsewhere in the following passage:—

'Commencing as an architectural draughtsman, but with a mind well stored with history and archaeological detail, his imagination soon began to fill with their ancient life the buildings which he drew, and his art was naturally inspired with that romantic spirit which, long felt in literature, had culminated in the novels of Sir Walter Scott. The great romantic movement among the artists of France was simultaneous with the appearance of Cattermole, who may be considered as the ally of Delacroix and Bonington, and as the greatest representative, if not the founder, in England, of the art that sought its motives in the restoration of bygone times, with their manners and customs, their architecture and costumes, their

chivalrous and religious sentiment, complete. To perform this part he brought a spirit naturally ardent, controlled by a fine and somewhat severe artistic taste, which, without destroying the energy and freedom of his design, permitted neither extravagance nor affectation.

'He had a gift of colour, a felicity and directness of touch, and a command of his materials, which had never been excelled in his line of art. He treated landscape and architecture with almost equal skill, and though his figures were on a small scale, and often shared but even honours with the scenes in which they were placed, they were always designed with spirit, living in gesture, and right in expression.'

Among the more important of the drawings exhibited at the Water-Colour Society were: *After the Sortie*, 1834; *Sir Walter Raleigh witnessing the Execution of the Earl of Essex in the Tower*, 1839; *Wanderers Entertained*, 1839 (engraved by Egan under the title of *Old English Hospitality*); *The Castle Chapel*, 1840; *Hamilton of Bothwellhaugh preparing to shoot the Regent Murray in* 1570, 1843; *After the Second Battle of Newbury*, 1843; *Benvenuto Cellini defending the Castle of St. Angelo*, 1845; *The Unwelcome Return*, 1846. Some of these are at the South

Kensington Museum, which is rich in the works of Cattermole, though some of them, especially the large engraved drawing of *The Diet of Spiers*, are not well preserved.

VIII.

THE WATER-COLOUR SOCIETY: BARRET, VARLEY, &c.

OF three of the foundation members of the Water-Colour Society—Nicolas Pocock, W. H. Pyne, and Joshua Cristall—something has already been said, and it will be convenient to treat of the rest of them in this chapter. Their first exhibition was held in 1805, but the Society had been formed the year before at a meeting which was held at the house of Samuel Shelley. Although Girtin was dead, and Turner was a Royal Academician, and the Society had therefore to start without the aid of the two greatest founders of the school of water-colour,

there were many good artists on their first roll. Fame is, indeed, somewhat silent as to the merits of Stephen Francis Rigaud, who first exhibited in 1797, and died at an unknown date after 1851, painter of portrait and history, sacred and profane; and Samuel Shelley (1750?–1808), though he was a pretty and popular miniaturist and a graceful painter of small fanciful subjects, was neither very original in design nor perfect in his drawing. It must, indeed, be admitted that the Society were weak in their figure painters, Cristall being by far the best, but in landscapes they were strong, for there were Barret and Havell, Glover and Varley, beside several other artists of considerable merit.

It is not, perhaps, possible to say much in praise of the art of William Sawrey Gilpin (1762–1843) the son of Sawrey Gilpin, R.A., the animal-painter, although he was elected the first President of the Society, and was appointed drawing-master at the Royal Military College of Great Marlow; and John Claude Nattes

(1765?–1822), was weak in character as well as in art, for he had to be expelled in 1807 for exhibiting in his own name drawings not by his own hand, in order to increase his share of the profits of the exhibition. But the rest were accomplished artists, most of whom could lay claim to some individuality. Among these were two of the few really intimate friends of Turner, James Holworthy (died 1841), and William Frederick Wells (1762–1836). They were both probably among the elders of the Society, though Holworthy's birth-date is not recorded. He was an able and elegant artist, very skilful in the use of Indian ink, but not venturing far in the new colour process. He married a niece of Wright of Derby. Both he and Wells sketched much in Wales, but the latter visited the Continent, and extended his sketching area to Norway and Sweden, an unusual enterprise in those days. Wells was President of the Water-Colour Society in 1806, and for many

years a professor of drawing at Addiscombe College. His daughter, Mrs. Wheeler, has presented a good example of his art to the South Kensington Museum—a drawing of a ruined castle above a river, called *The Dawn.* It is to her pen that we owe the most tender account of Turner, to whom in his youth her father's house was a 'second home, a haven of rest from many domestic trials too sacred to touch upon.' She adds:

'He was a firm, affectionate friend to the end of his life; his feelings were seldom on the surface, but they were deep and enduring. No one would have imagined, under that rather rough and cold exterior, how very strong were the affections which lay hidden beneath. I have more than once seen him weep bitterly, particularly at the death of my own dear father, which took him by surprise, for he was blind to the coming event, which he dreaded. He came immediately to my house in an agony of tears. Sobbing like a child he said, "Oh, Clara! Clara! these are iron tears! I have lost the best friend I ever had in my life!"'

It was at Wells' house that the idea of the 'Liber Studiorum' was started, and it is said

to have originated with Wells, who suggested its divisions into 'Pastoral,' 'Elegant Pastoral,' 'Marine,' &c.

Another man, not of the first rank as an artist, but yet of considerable ability and ingenuity, was Francis Nicholson (1753–1844), who in the course of his unusually long life must have exercised considerable influence as a teacher. 'His subjects were chiefly rushing streams, waterfalls, and shipwrecks,' says the Catalogue of the South Kensington Museum, where a good many of his drawings are preserved. He was an ingenious person, much given to experiments in *technique*. He made over 800 drawings on the stone, and is said to have had much influence on the advancement of the art of lithography. He also invented a method of securing the high lights of his water-colours by a composition of wax and turpentine insoluble in water, but easily removed by the application of turpentine. An account of this method will be found in the 'Transactions of the Society of Arts' in

1799. It is also explained in Nicholson's 'Practice of Drawing and Painting Landscape from Nature in Water-Colours,' a work which is interesting for the information it gives as to the processes of colouring recommended by an artist of some standing in the year 1820. He gives three processes, in all of which the whole subject is first laid in in grey, and a fourth in which you are to begin with the local colours; from which it may be gathered that the reforms of Girtin and Turner were a long time in making their way to anything like universal adoption. It is plain that Nicholson himself but half likes this fourth method; for though he allows that it will give great clearness and brilliancy, he adds that 'without considerable practice the work will frequently be deficient in harmony, breadth, and, above all, in repose.'

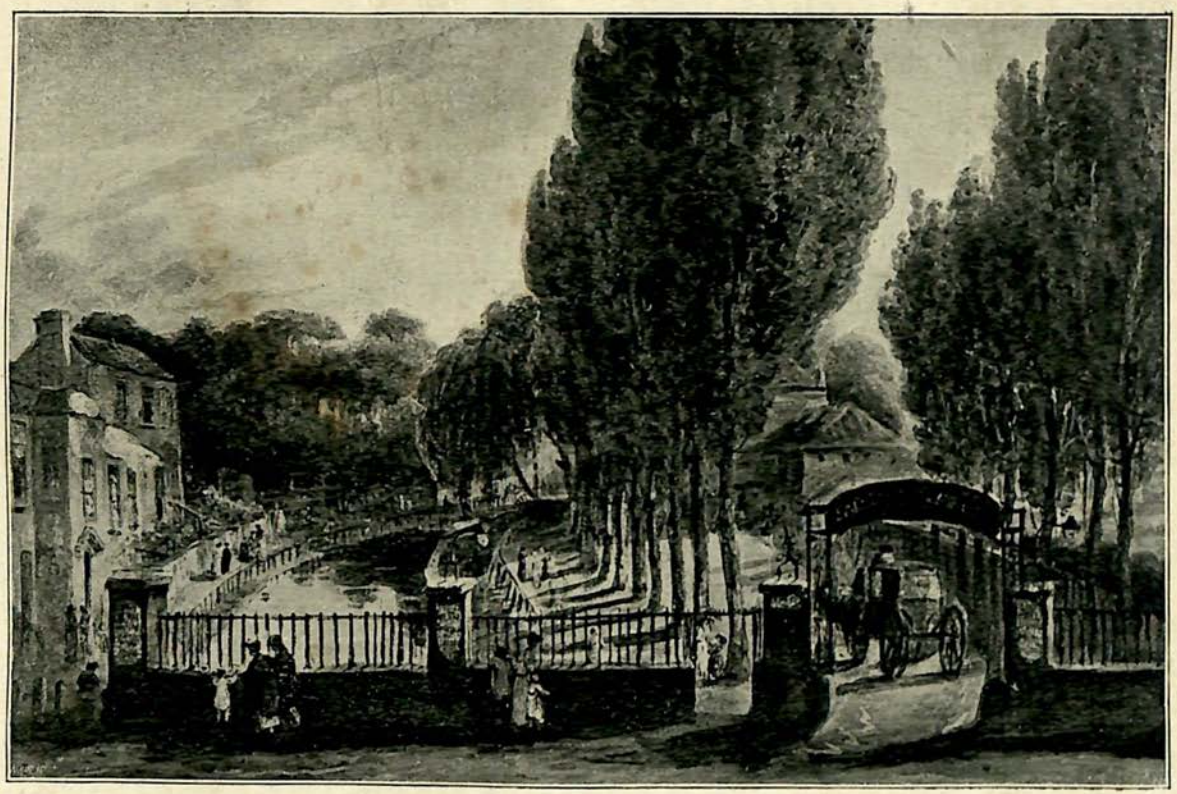
The name of John Glover (1767–1849) was suddenly brought before the public at the famous Hamilton sale, in 1882, by the unexpected price given by Mr. Arnot, an American gentleman,

for a water-colour drawing of *A View in Borrowdale* (Lot 1105). This pretty but not very wonderful example of water-colour art sold for £210. If sold again it would probably not fetch half that sum, for his work is not very highly esteemed among connoisseurs. Yet he was a clever artist of some individuality and a good deal of dexterity; his sunlight was transparent and his colour pleasant. I have two of his drawing-books full of charming sketches. In his day, also, he was prized, and one of his pictures, *Durham Cathedral*, sold for as much as 500 guineas. He was also a fashionable teacher. The great defect of his art is that it is mannered and constrained; the forms, especially in the foreground, conventional and stiff: he was accomplished but petty. Messrs. Redgrave, in their Dictionary, say that his execution was 'rude and blotted;' but, though such a description may be true of some of his drawings where he tried to be free and sketchy, it is not true as a rule, and in many of his works

laboration and minuteness of touch is carried to excess. Glover was one of the first members of the Water-Colour Society, and contributed largely to its early exhibitions. In 1815 he was elected President of the Society. Like, indeed, most of the water-colourists, he worked in oil as well as in water-colour, and left the Water-Colour Society in 1818 in order to try for admission into the Royal Academy, but he did not succeed; and in 1824 he was one of the founders of the Society of British Artists, to which he belonged till his death. Glover was a self-taught artist, and had also some skill in music. He had intended to spend his last years in the Lake district, and had bought a house near Ulswater; but in 1831, being then sixty-four years of age, he went out to Australia, and sent home several pictures of Colonial scenery. He died in Tasmania in his eighty-third year. There is a good example of his oil-painting in the National Gallery.

A better artist than Glover, both in water-

colours and oils, was William Havell (1782–1857), the son of a drawing-master at Reading. His earlier drawings in Wales and Westmoreland are broad and masterly in treatment, and, like all his work, show careful study of nature. Several of them are at the South Kensington Museum, where is also a beautiful view of Windsor by him. He was a true artist, and deserves to be mentioned among the real promoters of the art of water-colour in England. He seceded from the Water-Colour Society on its reconstitution in 1813, but joined it again in 1827. Meanwhile he had been to China as draughtsman to Lord Amherst's embassy, had resigned his position after an unfortunate quarrel, and had spent several years in India, where he practised his art with success. On his return it is said that he found his position as an artist had been taken by younger men, and he began to paint in oil, and was a constant exhibitor at the Royal Academy. He does not, however, appear to have been very successful,



SADLERS WELLS. *By W. Havell.*

and his difficulties were increased by the failure of a bank in which some of his Indian savings were invested. These later pictures of his deserved to have been better received, for they were bright and pure in colour and very luminous. Their subjects were chiefly taken from Italy, which he visited in 1827. But of all the sixteen foundation members of the Water-Colour Society the most important were G. Barret and John Varley. The latter (1778–1842), and his brother Cornelius (1781–1873), were both foundation members, and a yet younger brother, William Fleetwood, also practised the art. The predilection of the family for art, which remains to this day, seems to have begun with John, and to have been followed without encouragement from his father, who is said to have been a man of varied scientific attainments, and tutor of Lord Stanhope's son. At the age of about thirteen John Varley was placed with a silversmith, but he was never apprenticed, and on his father's death

he freed himself from the engagement. He then procured employment with a portrait-painter, and at the age of sixteen with a drawing-master named Barrow, in whose academy Francia also was an assistant. About 1797 Barrow took his pupil with him to Peterborough, and in 1798 Varley exhibited a view of Peterborough Cathedral at the Royal Academy. In the next year he went to Wales, which he revisited in 1800 and 1802, and after that he made a tour in the northern counties of England, following the usual career of those 'draughtsmen' who founded the water-colour school. He was also one of the frequent visitors at Dr. Monro's in the Adelphi.

After the formation of the Water-Colour Society Varley left off exhibiting at the Royal Academy for twenty years, during which time he was the most prolific contributor to the exhibitions of the Society. To the first exhibition, in 1805, he sent forty-one drawings; in 1809 as many as fifty-nine; and he never

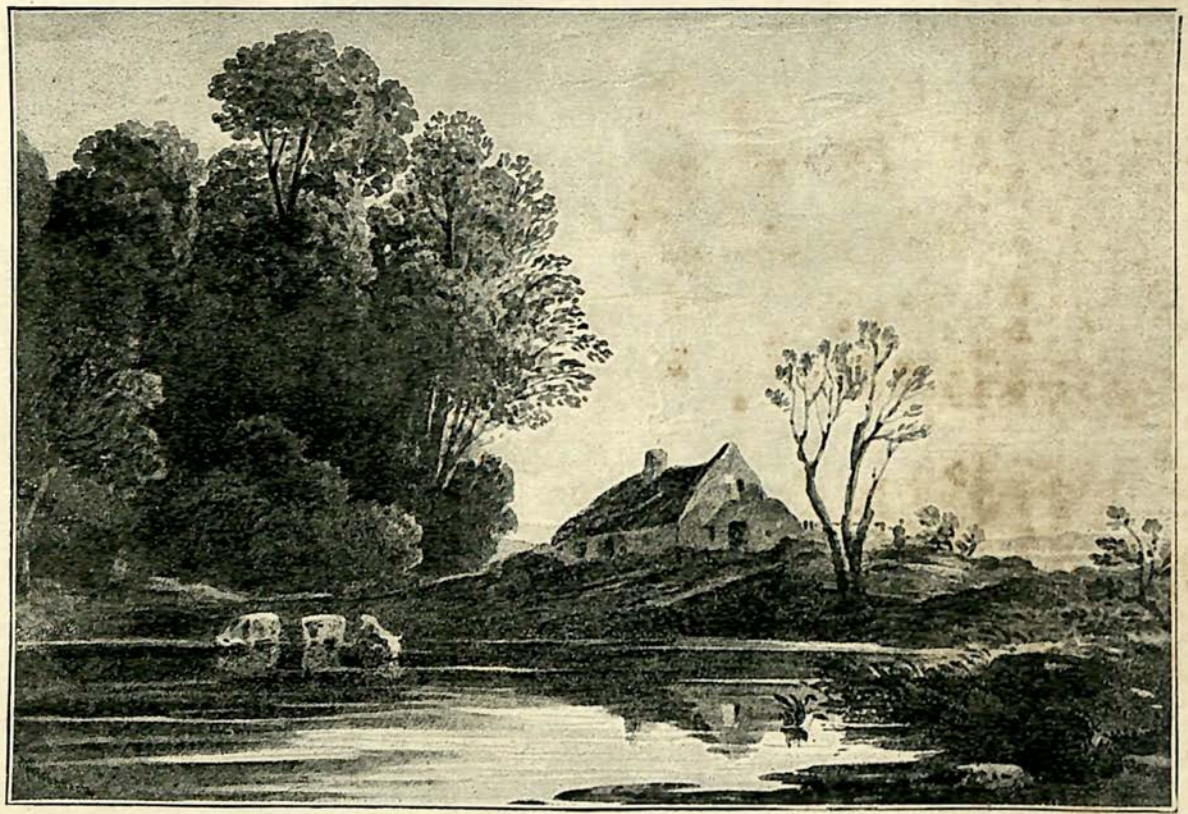
ceased to contribute largely till his death. The year before this event (1842), as I have been informed by one who knew him well, he forgot all about the exhibition till six weeks before it opened. On being reminded he set to work, and completed within the six weeks forty-one drawings, ranging in value from £10 to £150.

According to the same informant, John Varley's work may be broadly divided into three classes :—1. Early drawings, formal, thinly coloured according to the water-colour style of the period, and full of carefully wrought detail. 2. Welsh drawings, showing fresh study of nature and effect. 3. Later drawings, generally compositions for which he drew upon the stores of his memory laid up during his middle period. These are marked by great power and richness of colouring.

'His latter drawings' (adds this gentleman) 'were bold in conception and so rich in colouring that, when the first of them were exhibited at the Water-Colour Society, they caused quite a sensation amongst the art-loving public—as also

amongst other exhibitors, whose pictures suffered so much by proximity with those of Varley as to need considerable strengthening and touching up. In that year all J. Varley's drawings could be distinguished at once, as they hung on the walls of the exhibition, by their powerful colouring. These drawings originated from an experiment he tried with common thin whitey-brown paper, whose texture and tone promised, as he thought, good results. It was a material difficult to manipulate, and had to be carefully mounted on stronger paper, but under the certain touch of this veteran artist it became the groundwork for effects and richness of colour which had seldom been surpassed.'

The South Kensington Museum is rich in the drawings of John Varley. The collection ranges from the beginning of the century to his death, and includes numerous specimens of the two later classes of his work—the drawings fresh from nature and the rich later compositions—forming together an epitome of the progress of water-colour art during the first half of the century. Nobody understood his craft better; in the laying of washes and in the clear, pure touch, he was equally a master; his colour is always good, and has that indefi-



LANDSCAPE. *By John Varley.*

nable property called 'quality.' The sky in the sketch here reproduced could scarcely be excelled in delicacy of gradation, in purity of colour, or in luminousness. It may be to a certain extent 'conventional,' but it is perfect in its skill. So great a producer as Varley cannot always keep up to the same level, but at his best it is difficult for any one to beat him, and in variety and range there are few who can equal him except Turner. Nevertheless, with all his elegance and almost incomparable skill, we think of him as next to all the great men of his school rather than as one of them, as a perfect craftsman rather than an original genius.

He had precisely those qualities which are most valuable in a teacher, and perhaps none of the earlier water-colour painters had a longer or more distinguished list of pupils. Among them may be mentioned William Hunt, John Linnell, David Cox, and Mulready, so that it is difficult to over-estimate the influence he

exerted on the school by both precept and example. He also published 'Observations on Colouring and Sketching from Nature,' and a 'Practical Treatise on Perspective.'

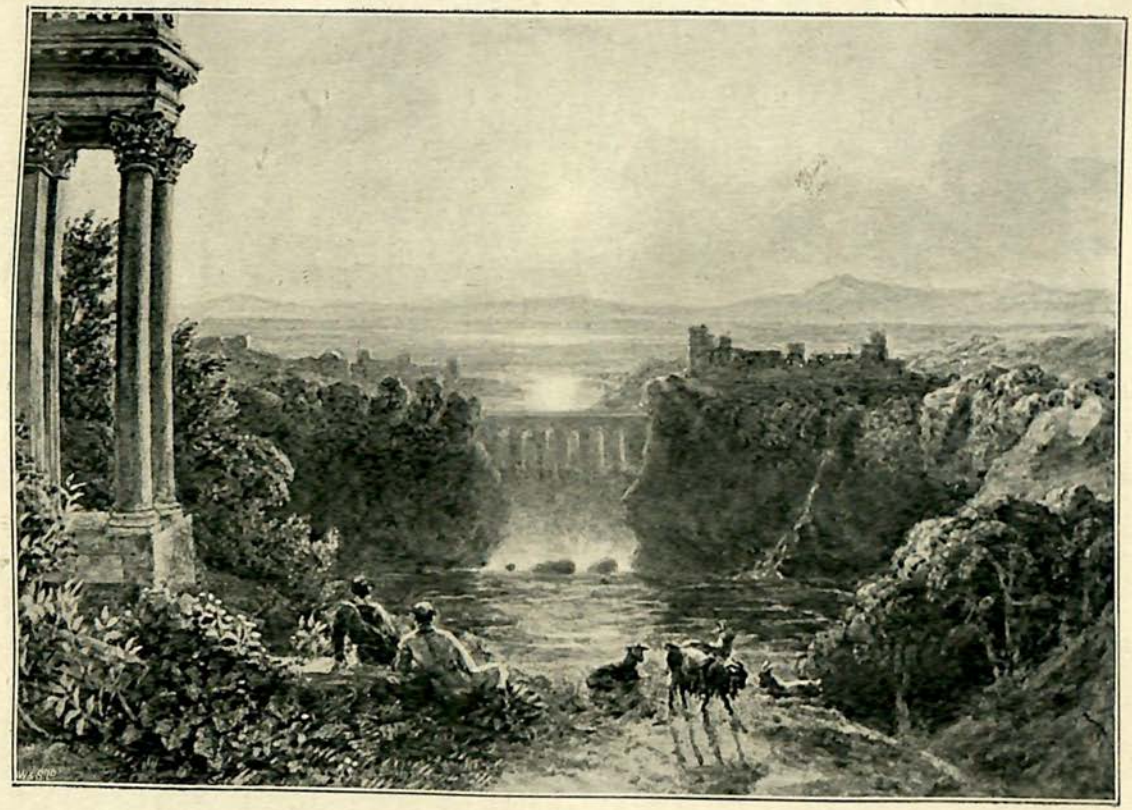
Thoroughly sound and healthy in his art, Varley had his weak points. One of these was a devotion to astrology, and he would not only give his pupils lessons in drawing, but also cast their nativities. Another was for mechanical inventions. One dark night a strange-looking vehicle with six wheels drew up to his house in Bayswater Terrace. This was his invention for the comfort of invalids. He and two friends tried it; but though the jolting is said to have been diminished by the extra wheels, the chief result of the experiment was loss of money, which he could ill afford.

If Varley was the most influential of the foundation members of the Water-Colour Society, George Barret, junior (1767 or 8–1842), was the greatest genius. As a colourist and a painter of sunlight and atmosphere he had no

rival in the Society, and scarcely out of it; indeed, of all the painters who ever 'placed the sun in the heavens' there have been few who could excel George Barret, junior. His work, for the most part, is what is called 'conventional.' He delighted in 'compositions'; he followed the 'tradition' of Claude; his aim was to be 'scenic.' In other words, he had an 'ideal.' Art for him was a selection of Nature seen under its most beautiful aspect, heightened by the most beautiful architecture, and graced by the most beautiful figures. Not that he confined himself entirely to classical compositions, for some of his finest drawings, notably one now or formerly belonging to Mr. James Orrock, of a country scene with a waggon and horses breaking up the light in the foreground, are English in subject, but he nearly always 'composed,' and his favourite composition was of a rich expanse melting in a far horizon spanned by a bridge in the middle distance, with slopes crowned with pine and cypress,

temple and tower, and the naked sun burning in a blue and amber sky. From such a drawing (also belonging to Mr. Orrock) the illustration opposite is taken. Sometimes he chose a cool morning effect, sometimes a warm afternoon, but the light is always clear and transparent, the scene always one of beauty and joy—a dream of paradise, suggestive often of England, but generally of Italy, as represented by Claude and Wilson.

He may possibly have been to Italy himself and there gained a feeling for a sunnier clime than his own, and scenery more imposing and stately, but there is no record of his life from which we can gather so much for certain, and the pictures he might have seen in England would have been sufficient to account for his imaginative conceptions of natural beauty. His drawings strive only after what was then the popular ideal—the 'high art' of landscape—the ideal of Sandby and Wilson and of Turner. The nearest things in art to his ethereal com-



EVENING. *By George Barret, jun.*

positions are the well-known large oil paintings of Turner—the *Bay of Baiæ*, the *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, *The Carthages*, the *Phryne going to the Bath*, and other works of this class. Turner executed few water-colour drawings of such subjects, and, therefore, among water-colour artists Barret stands almost alone, if not in aim, at least in success. Turner himself could not excel him on this ground, and, indeed, it may be doubted if this greater artist ever achieved such perfect irradiation, such limpidity of sunlight, or could obtain at once such elaboration and such purity as Barret in his finest drawings.

Like Turner, Barret was so bent first and foremost and beyond all on obtaining his effects of light and colour that he was apt to be comparatively careless of his figures, though, when he chose, he could draw them well enough. His trees also are often conventional in form and spotty in the foliage. But he never failed in his chief aim. Though his pictures were generally small

and his usual medium water-colour, he sometimes painted in oil, and executed at least one very large oil painting (a rich composition with a luminous sky reflected in a lake), which has been presented to the nation by Mr. Orrock, and is now in the South Kensington Museum.

It is strange how little is known of this fine artist. He was the son of George Barret, R.A., already mentioned in this book, who died in pecuniary difficulties and left his family pensioners of the Royal Academy. What this family consisted of, and when George Barret, junior, was born, are not known apparently, but he had one brother and a sister both of whom painted in water-colours. They appear to have been older than George, who was born about 1774, and first appears in history as an exhibitor at the Royal Academy in 1800. He continued to exhibit there occasionally till his death, but it was to the Water-Colour Society that he was the most constant and large contributor. Notwithstanding a life of constant labour, he,

'striving rather for excellence than gain, only earned enough to meet the daily wants of his family.' So, like his father before him, though apparently with much more excuse, he left his family in poverty. He died in 1842 after a long illness. In 1840 he published a series of letters on the 'Theory and Practice of Water-colour Painting.'

The only 'foundation member' who remains to be noticed is Robert Hills (1769–1844), justly celebrated as a painter and etcher of animals. He painted in water-colours only, and his usual subjects are picturesque bits of park or lane with cattle and deer. He was a very industrious artist, never tired of studying animals and sketching them faithfully from Nature. He published a large number of etchings, of which there is a particularly fine collection in the British Museum numbering about 1240. Unfortunately, most of his drawings have not lasted well, but his composition was pleasing, and his colour rich. His chief fault as a painter was

over-elaboration. He frequently introduced animals into the drawings of other artists, especially those of George Barret, junior, and Robson.

IX.

EDRIDGE AND PROUT.

THE early water-colour art was, as has been said over and over again, based upon line and monochrome wash; and its tendency under the new method, introduced mainly by Girtin, was, through tinting, to full colour, and the obliteration of outline. To get rid of outline, as non-existent in Nature and an interruption of colour—indeed, to get rid of line altogether—has been one of the aims of modern painters. The term drawing, as applied to painting, has in fact changed its meaning in the memory of most of us. By drawing used to be understood drawing by line, but now it means rendering the true form of objects by that or any other kind of touch; often, indeed, by the most

irregular spots and patches, form being analysed, not by the boundaries of contours and lines of construction, but by all the innumerable and indefinite spaces of all sizes and shapes, differing in tone and colour, which go to make up the appearance of a solid body. This is the language of the brush as distinguished from the language of the point. But modern practice has gone even beyond this, and drawing with the point now apes drawing with the brush, and we see a piece of drapery which would formerly have had its folds and flowings, its puffings-out and sinkings-in, expressed by lines of varied curve, each of which took exact notice of the form to be shown, now drawn with a number of little scratches, the direction of which is not at all determined by the forms of the drapery, is not indeed material at all, the object being to secure the right tone at the particular place where they are applied.

But at the beginning of the century drawing still meant drawing by line, and the 'draughts-

man' was essentially a drawer and shader of a precise outline. It was before the days of Fortuny, and Mr. Abbey, and Mr. Joseph Pennell. There was always a close and natural affinity between the method of drawing by the old 'draughtsmen' and that employed by the engraver who reproduced their works. The earliest men, like Alexander Cozens, based their style of drawing—fine penwork—on the style of the line-engraver on copper; in Sandby and his school, aquatint, which could give the effect of a water-colour wash, appears to have been the imitator rather than the example. If not invented for the purpose of reproducing the drawing in line and wash, aquatint was perfected for that purpose; and this close relation having been established between the two arts, they mutually supported one another, and no doubt drawings continued to be made in a way which would render their reproduction by aquatint easy, just as the designer for wood-engraving would draw his design in lines specially adapted to be cut

in relief. Aquatint was a simple and mechanical process compared with the elaborate engravings on copper and steel, afterwards produced by such engravers as Goodall, Wallis, Willmore, Brandard, Finden, Pye, and others, who formed that most brilliant and original school of engravers of landscape called into existence mainly by the genius of Turner. These were engravers of paintings—as distinguished from drawings—in both oil and water-colour, great artists in the translation of colour into tone, masters of effect, but always speaking in the now half-forgotten language of line.

It is not of line-engraving, however, that it is essential to speak here, but of a very different art—that of lithography, which at the beginning of the century began to take the place of aquatint and etching as a means for the popular reproduction of drawings. It was adapted especially for drawings with a more or less blunt point, for drawings in pencil and chalk and the reed pen, as distinct from drawings with a

fine pen. It had the further advantage that the drawing could be done by the artist himself upon the stone, and his work exactly reproduced without the intermediation of a second interpreting artist. The crumbling touch of chalk, the broad, loose line of the reed pen, the infinite gradation and sharp accent of the blacklead pencil, reappeared on the printed lithograph with little or no loss of expression. Its only rival in these respects was the soft-ground etching, a process more difficult and uncertain, with other disadvantages in the way of size, expense, &c., which need not be examined in this place. Lithography, which is said to have been invented in 1796 by Alois Sennefelder, a German, was introduced into England about the beginning of the century, and soon flourished there as well as in Germany and France. It has been used with great effect for the reproduction of many kinds of pictorial art, from oil-paintings by ancient masters (as in the admirable series from the Dresden Gallery) to the sketches and draw-

ings of the modern, like Bonington, Harding, Cattermole, Prout, J. F. Lewis, and David Roberts; but for the reasons given above it is for sketches in chalk and pencil that it is most peculiarly adapted, and especially for those in which the touch of the artist is an essential element of beauty. It seems, indeed, to have been specially invented for such artists as Edridge and Bonington and Prout.

Of all of these, and of all other artists whose works have been reproduced by lithography, the typical instance of exact affinity between the artist and the process is Prout; and of all the elements of his art which this process is most valuable in reproducing the most distinctive is his broken touch. Further, we may also pick out the subject on which his touch was most appropriately and picturesquely employed, and this was old Gothic architecture—worn, mutilated, chipped, and broken, presenting every variety of outline, except the unbroken and precise, and every variety of surface except the

smooth and shadowless. The history of water-colour painting is very intimately connected with the taste for Gothic architecture, especially in its picturesque aspects. This taste may be said to have been founded and fostered by the 'draughtsman,' who mainly in the interests of topography and archaeology went all over England drawing all the cathedrals and other remains of ancient national architecture, and taught the English public their value as pictorial material. The means of expression hitherto used for architectural drawing was found to be inadequate to present the picturesqueness of these new objects of pictorial art. Before this the ideal architecture of the landscape-painter was classical, and such artists, principally architects and their assistants, who went abroad to draw architecture and ruins, drew classical architecture and ruins exclusively. To do this the sharp, thin, clear, unbroken line—the line reminiscent of the drawing pen, interrupted but unvaried in stress — was sufficient for their

purpose. It was the damage done, rather than the beauty resulting from the damage, that they wished to show. If they put any feeling into their work, it was the pathos of mutilation that they wished to express, rather than the decorative loveliness with which Time embroiders confusion and decay. Think how perfect it was, how marred is the original design, they said, when they said anything. At all events, whether they had need of it or not, they did not find or use the indefinite picturesque broken line, which was invented (or at least first fully appreciated) by Girtin, was brought to perfection by Bonington and Edridge, and carried to mannerism, if not to excess, by Prout, in their delineation of Gothic architecture in England and the Continent.

The language of the blunt, irregular line—broken not only in length but width—the line which does not only mark the shape or construction of an object, but expresses also something of its character, substance, and surface, and the

effect of light and air upon it, did not, of course, begin with our water-colourists and the drawing of Gothic architecture, but it may be said to have then taken up a new parable.

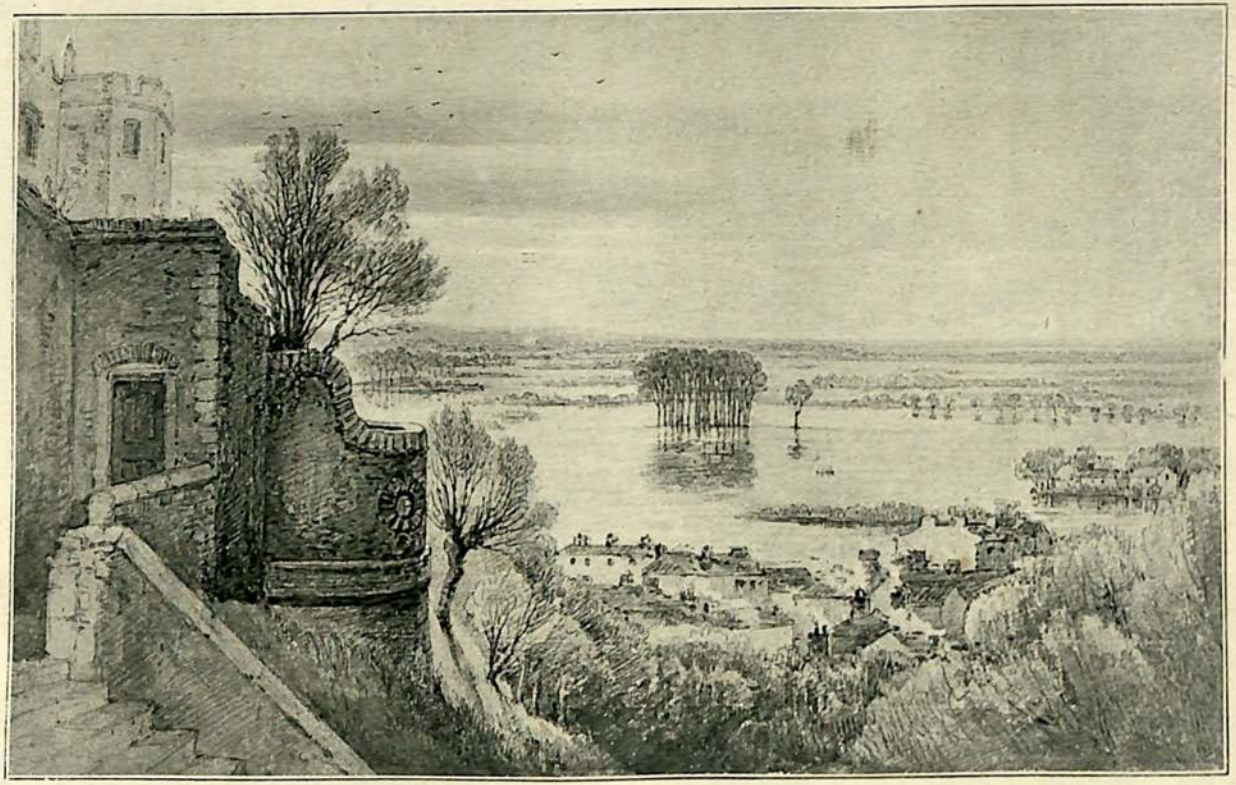
In responsiveness to the hand and in power of rapid indication no drawing instrument equals the blacklead pencil. Most of the water-colourists at the beginning of the century were masters in its use. No one of these was a greater master than Turner, but he employed it chiefly in rapid memoranda and slight sketches. If we want to see how much could be expressed by such simple means we must go to the drawings of men like Edridge and Prout and the lithographs from their works.

If we want to see the comparative merits of the hard ink line and the soft touch of pencil or chalk in rendering the picturesque appearance of Gothic architecture, we may study the etchings of Cotman and the lithographs of or after Bonington and Prout, all of which are excellent of their kind; but it must not be forgotten that

Cotman was more concerned with the architectural and archaeological interest of his buildings than that pictorial attractiveness which the 'broken line' of Prout was so specially designed to render. Prout was certainly a master of it, but he cannot be credited, as he sometimes is, with inventing it. Edridge, at least, was before him.

Henry Edridge, A.R.A. (1769–1821), was certainly one of the greatest masters of pencil. Taking it all in all, there is perhaps no existing drawing which shows the range of its picturesque expressiveness in architecture and figures more completely than his drawing of the *Tour de la Grosse-Horloge*, at Evreux, which is in the British Museum.[1] It may be compared, and not to its disadvantage, with Bonington's drawing of the *Rue de la Grosse-Horloge*, at Rouen, lithographed in Baron Taylor's 'Voyages Pittoresques dans l'Ancienne France—Normandie, 1825;' and Edridge's drawing was probably

[1] Reproduced in THE PORTFOLIO for December, 1880.



FLOODS AT ETON. *by H. Edridge.*

made several years earlier, during one of his visits to France, in 1817 or 1819. Two other drawings in pencil by Edridge, equally fine, are of *The Château de Guillaume*, at Falaise, and a large view of *The Floods at Eton seen from Windsor Castle.* The latter (here given) is on grey paper heightened with white, and is notable for the beauty and elegance of the composition and its masterly treatment of a wide expanse of country. The graceful group of trees in the middle distance point to another accomplishment which he possessed in advance of most of his fellows. Some drawings by him at South Kensington are remarkable for their truth in the drawing of trees, and show that he studied their characters carefully and had a true feeling for the beauty of their growth. As examples alike of pure English country and pure English water-colour it would not be easy to excel two large drawings by Edridge in the British Museum representing Great Bookham and Aldenham Churches. In short, Edridge

was a master both of the point and the brush; his touch was not only lively and picturesque, but sensitive, well accented, and refined; his handling of the brush was free, but accurate and expressive; and his colour was harmonious and full of 'quality.' When it is added that the delineation of architecture and landscape was only one side, and that not the most professional side of his art, it must be acknowledged that he was an artist of rare and varied gifts, and worthy of more respect and reputation than he has yet received.

The branch of the profession which Edridge adopted more especially was that of miniature, and the British Museum possesses quite a gallery of his little portraits beautifully finished. Most of them are in pencil only, but some have the flesh-tints added in colour, and one of them (a copy of Gilbert Stuart's portrait of Woollett the engraver) is in very full colour. Of special value in connexion with water-colour painting, are a slight but lively sketch of Girtin and

finished portraits of Thomas Hearne, Stothard, and Edridge himself. There are also an excellent portrait of Nollekens the sculptor and two of Bartolozzi. It is interesting to remember in connexion with these portraits that both Hearne and Edridge began life as engravers, that Woollett was Hearne's master, and that Edridge is said to have acquired his taste for landscape from a study of Hearne's drawings. Edridge was the pupil of William Pether, the mezzotint engraver, son of 'Moonlight' Pether, and himself a painter of landscapes. Edridge also studied for a while in the studio of Sir Joseph Reynolds, as Turner did, and he was one of the friends of Dr. Monro. The senior of Turner and Girtin by about six years, he should perhaps have had his notice earlier in these pages, but he began life as an engraver and portraitist, and cannot be reckoned among the earlier 'draughtsmen.' He did not belong to the Water-Colour Society, and it is not till 1814 that we find him exhibiting landscapes at the Royal

Academy. He then exhibited four English scenes, and with the exception of about a dozen views on the Continent, exhibited 1819, 1820, 1821, he does not appear to have come again before the public except as a portrait-painter. He was elected an Associate in 1820 and died the year after.

Samuel Prout (1783–1852) was born at Plymouth, and had a sunstroke when a child, which left him always weakly. He began life as a 'draughtsman' under John Britton, but for many years made little progress. Between 1803 and 1827 he exhibited occasionally at the Royal Academy, his earlier works being chiefly views and coast scenes in Devonshire. Though some of these landscapes have been highly praised, they do not count for much in his art history, which practically commenced with his first visit to the Continent in 1818—a visit said to have been dictated by ill-health rather than for purposes of study or in search of picturesque material. It was a most fortunate holiday for

him, for it opened out to him a field of pictorial interest which was most congenial to his taste, and was hitherto practically unworked. Some had indeed been before him, like Edridge, but he was the first to take possession, and the public were thoroughly prepared to accept and enjoy his pictorial records of places of which they had for many years heard so much and seen so little.

It was not till after the surrender of Napoleon in 1815 that the Continent was, after a long interval, again open to foreign tourists; and from this time may be dated the interest shown by artists and the public in the picturesque appearance of old towns in France and Germany, with their Gothic cathedrals, their old houses of wood and stone, their narrow streets and broad market-places, and the crowds of picturesque figures in strange and gay costume, which then added so much to their variety and colour. 'Then'—alas! for they are rapidly disappearing, and with them also have disappeared so many of

the houses also, that in many towns the ecclesiastical buildings are almost all that is left of that quaint old-world feeling and picturesque charm in which our fathers delighted.

If for no other reason than this we ought to be grateful to Samuel Prout, who spent so much of his life in showing us what Continental towns were like in his day. It was just this which he did more persistently, if not better, than other masters. The great popularity of his work when it was produced, and since, is only to be accounted for on this ground, for he was not a very good colourist nor a very fine draughtsman. His merits as an artist consisted principally in a true sense of proportion, in the breadth and simplicity of his treatment, and the dexterity with which he managed, by lines rude, summary, but well chosen, to give a prettily rugged and picturesque style to his compositions. This style was especially effective in dealing with

PORCH OF RATISBON CATHEDRAL. *By Prout.*

old weather-worn Gothic buildings in the towns of France and Germany, full of chinks and chipped edges, and every variety of picturesque shapelessness. But it failed him in interiors, even of Gothic buildings, where the sculpture was unbroken and the traceries complete; failed him most of all in Italy, where the faces of buildings were of smooth marble, and the ornament too subtle for his hand; failed him even in the ruins of Roman architecture, which required a touch and a feeling of another kind.

But his work was sincere, earnest, and modest, as Mr. Ruskin says in those charming notes of his on 'Prout and Hunt,'—notes written, perhaps, with something of affectionate special pleading, eloquent in praise and gentle in rebuke, but on the whole finely critical and just, and valuable, moreover and specially, as expressing not only the opinion, but the feeling of one who knew and loved the artist, and watched his work

from year to year. Who but Mr. Ruskin could describe with such delicate humour the position of Prout among his fellows more than fifty years ago?—

'I cannot but recollect with feelings of considerable refreshment, in these days of the deep, the lofty, and the mysterious, what a simple company of connoisseurs we were, who crowded into happy meetings, on the first Mondays in Mays of long ago, in the bright large room of the old Water-Colour Society, and discussed, with holiday gaiety, the unimposing merits of the favourites, from whose pencils we knew precisely what to expect, and by whom we were never disappointed or surprised. Copley Fielding used to paint fishing boats for us in a fresh breeze, *Off Dover*, *Off Ramsgate*, *Off the Needles*—off everywhere on the south coast where anybody had been last autumn; but we were always kept pleasantly in sight of land, and never saw so much as a gun fired in distress. Mr. Robson would occasionally paint a Bard, on a heathery crag in Wales; or it might be a Lady of the Lake on a similar piece of Scottish foreground—Benvenue in the distance. A little fighting in the time of Charles the First was permitted to Mr. Cattermole, and Mr. Cristall would sometimes invite virtuous sympathy to attend the meeting of two lovers at a wishing-gate or a holy well. But the furthest flights even of these poetical members of the Society were seldom beyond the confines of the British Islands; the vague dominions of the air, and vasty ones of the deep, were held to be practically unvoyageable by our un-Dædal pinions, and on the safe level of our native soil, the sturdy statistics of Mr. De Wint, and blunt pastorals of Mr.

Cox, restrained within limits of probability and sobriety, alike the fancy of the idle and the ambition of the vain.

'It became, however, by common and tacit consent, Mr. Prout's privilege, and it remained his privilege exclusively, to introduce foreign elements of romance and amazement into this—perhaps slightly fenny—atmosphere of English common sense. In contrast with our Midland locks and barges, his *On the Grand Canal, Venice*, was an Arabian enchantment; among the mildly elegiac country churchyards at Llangollen or Stoke Pogis, his *Sepulchral Monuments at Verona* were Shakespearian tragedy, and to us who had just come into the room out of Finsbury or Mincing Lane, his *Street in Nuremburg* was a German fairy tale.'

X.

HUNT, DE WINT, AND COPLEY FIELDING.

THERE are few things more remarkable, or indeed more admirable, in the history of English art, than the distinctness of individuality which characterises the works of the artists, not only of the first but the second rank. Men like Hogarth and Turner stand out beyond any classification, but the same is almost as true of artists like Stothard and Prout, De Wint and William Hunt. All of these—and the list might be very largely increased—have some *cachet* peculiar to themselves, some excellence in which they are superlative, which separates them as distinct units in the general history of their country's art, and preserves them an immortality as sure,

if not as splendid, as that of their more illustrious fellows. It is one of the loving anxieties of Mr. Ruskin, in his notes on Prout and Hunt, to emphasise with his certain touch these superlative qualities in these favourite masters of his. He insists on Prout's power to represent the exact aspect of places, on his skill in selection of line, on his sense of true magnitude, on his special feeling for the Gothic spire; and he holds up Hunt to our admiration as a faultless painter of fruit and flowers, and points out how finely he has seized, and how beautifully he has rendered, what is sweet and noble in the honest and unsophisticated English peasantry. But he has chosen him for praise chiefly on account of his consummate skill as a painter in water-colour. This (at all events in connexion with these papers) is his supreme and superlative quality. He used his materials—his water-colours—with a knowledge and skill which has never been equalled, *i.e.*, in the representation of his class of subjects,

especially fruit and flowers. He began life as a landscape-painter; but though his work of this class is of no little merit, it is probable that for many reasons, of which his health was one, he would never have attained to a very prominent place among landscape-painters. Leaving this field to others, he chose a little plot of his own and cultivated it to perfection. Therefore, though modest in his aim and of no great strength, poetical or intellectual, he holds his particular place, and is as difficult to class as the greatest—at least among the earlier English painters in water-colour. Among these, indeed, there is none with whom to compare him; and even amongst those that have followed him, though there have been many refined and skilful painters of similar subjects, he has no equal. Standing, therefore, so alone, there is no place into which he naturally falls in a sequential history of English water-colours, and the fact that Mr. Ruskin has placed him by the side of Prout is, in default

of a better, a sufficient excuse for mentioning him here.

William Henry Hunt (1790–1864) was the son of a tinplate-worker in Bolton Street, Long Acre, where he was born on March 28, 1790. Like Prout he was a sickly child and always delicate throughout his life—more delicate than Prout, who was at least able to undertake long journeys and endure much fatigue in the exercise of his profession, whereas Hunt was from physical necessity obliged to choose subjects which were within easy reach, and could be studied quietly and at leisure. He was apprenticed to John Varley, and was a visitor at Dr. Monro's, staying with him for a month at a time and receiving seven and sixpence a-day for the drawings he produced. He became a student of the Royal Academy in 1808, and exhibited there occasionally ('Landscapes' and 'Sketches from Nature') for some years. His first contributions are said to have been in oil, but he commenced to exhibit at

the Water-Colour Society in 1814, and henceforth devoted himself to it. He was elected an Associate in 1824, and in 1827 a full member, after which he became a large and constant contributor, his subjects being principally confined to fruit and flowers, with an occasional dead bird or rustic figure. He spent much of his time at Hastings, and died in Stanhope Street, London, on February 10th, 1864. This is nearly all that is recorded of the life of William Hunt.

Mr. Ruskin has pointed out how the spirit in which Hunt painted his flowers and fruit differed from that of Van Huysum and the rest of the old painters of still life. He did not paint them to show their decorative value in ornamenting the sumptuous tables of the rich, nor to show his own skill in imitation; he painted them out of pure love for the things themselves, for the love of their beauty of form, and colour, and texture, in all the freshness of their prime. He did not make

his flowers up into bouquets, or mass his fruit in luxurious heaps, but painted them singly as they lay fresh-plucked, disposed as it were accidentally, but really with an art which concealed itself. He invited us, not to feast in imagination on his luscious plums and pears, but to admire their loveliness; not to admire a masterpiece of painting, but one of nature. He painted them tenderly—we may say reverently. Though they were plucked he would not divorce them entirely from nature; he did not set them off with Turkey carpets and silver salvers, but preferred to rest them on some mossy bank, warm in the sun which had given them their beauty. Such perfection of modelling, such close imitation of colour and texture, such almost atomic truth of finish, have seldom or never been combined with such breadth in effect, such preservation of general truth. His finish was true finish, each touch adding to the completeness, not concealing the want of it. It may not be thought very

high art, this careful imitation of still objects, however beautifully arranged, however pure and lovely the result. To devote a life to the rendering of the most exquisite qualities of a dove's breast, or a spray of hawthorn, may seem but a poor enterprise. But it is for the painter as well as the poet to 'shine in his place and be content,' and few have shone more contentedly or brightly than William Hunt. What he did he did well, almost perfectly, and to those who love art one of his plums outweighs in true value many efforts of unsuccessful ambition. Moreover his pictures of country life must not be forgotten. He painted his rustic figures in much the same spirit as his flowers—their faces ruddy with the sun; their frank, honest eyes, and strong bodies, their rough smocks and hobnailed shoes, just as they were. He gave as, perhaps, no other artist has quite given, the shy sweetness of the girls, the awkwardness of the hoydens, the unrefined appetites of the boys, the patri-

A Doubtful Coin. *By W. Hunt.*

archal nobleness of the old men. The drawings of the *Shy Sitter* and *The Blessing* are, perhaps, the best known of the nobler figure-pictures of Hunt. They were photographed for the illustrated edition of Mr. Ruskin's 'Notes on Hunt and Prout,' and *The Blessing* has been etched by Waltner. But there are others of the same class, and much the same quality. One of these, though called *A Monk*, in the fine and simple seriousness of its expression is allied to *The Blessing*. In the technical history of the art of water-colours, Hunt holds also a place almost as unique. His mastery of his materials was consummate. He showed the whole power of its colour—in perfect imitation of that of nature, in brilliancy, in strength, in subtlety, and in richness, and he attained its limit of brilliancy by using transparent washes and touches over a ground of flake white. In manipulation, also—in variety and certainty of touch, in the rendering of texture, and, perhaps specially, in the use of

body-colour, in perfect union with transparent colour—in all these ways, and many more, he may claim to have extended the resources of his art almost as far as they would go.

To return to our landscape-painters. Two of the illustrations to this chapter are by artists who, if they do not hold any recognised position of importance in the history of English water-colour, were both men of interest and good artists. One of these was William Daniell, R.A. (1769–1837), nephew of Thomas Daniell, R.A., a man of some distinction in his day as a painter, a traveller, and an antiquarian. At the age of fourteen the nephew accompanied his uncle to India, where they made sketches for an important work, afterwards published under the title of 'Oriental Scenery.' For many years his subjects were principally drawn from his Indian sketches, but in 1802 he began to exhibit at the Royal Academy drawings of scenes in the north of England. His drawing of *Durham Cathedral*, in the South Kensington

DURHAM. *By William Daniell.*

Museum, is dated 1805, and is a masterly production, the point of view finely selected, the execution broad and powerful, and much in the manner of Girtin both in colour and handling. He engraved as well as painted, and published several illustrated books. The most extensive of these was his 'Voyage round Great Britain,' which was entirely executed by himself. His work deserves more attention than can be paid to it here; and the same may be said of that of Augustus Pugin (1782–1832), a Frenchman, and father of the well-known architect, Augustus Welby Pugin. The father was specially interested in architecture, and it may be gathered from his view of St. Mary, Oxford, in the South Kensington Museum, that, though he was an adept in the use of water-colours, his drawings are distinguished more for the truth and care with which the buildings are drawn than for their picturesque qualities. It is as one of the first to study Gothic architecture with attention, and draw it with accuracy and knowledge,

that he is most to be remembered. He was for twenty years an assistant of John Nash, the architect of Waterloo Place and Regent Street, with whose professional taste he could have had little sympathy. But it was yet to be a long time before the true beauty of Gothic architecture was again to appeal to our countrymen, and the elder Pugin had to be content with laying the foundations for its revival. For the public it was interesting as an antiquated curiosity, and its picturesqueness (in a drawing) was becoming daily more acknowledged through the labours of those draughtsmen who had turned topography into art.

As the position of the water-colour school becomes established we find the spirit of the artist gradually overcoming that of the topographer until, even in pictures of which architecture forms the main subject, the attitude of the painter is rather that of one who paints what he likes than the executor of an order for a portrait of a famous building, whereas

the number of painters who concern themselves principally with the beauty and character of English country gradually increases. Thus surely and not very slowly a school of pure landscape was formed among the water-colourists, and a number of men arose who as landscape-painters deserved to hold the highest rank among the artists of the period. Their great merit, as we see it now, was that they studied English scenery as it had never been studied before—its hills and its trees, its rivers, and, above all, its skies; studied all with simple love and unambitious earnestness, finding out day by day some new means of rendering some effect of light, and colour, and atmosphere familiar enough to all, but unattempted and unconquered by previous painters. Content to live a humble life without the hope of any great gains, accepting even professionally a subordinate rank as artists, these water-colourists laboured on quietly and accomplished a work of which they scarcely appreciated the importance or the magnitude.

Of these interpreters of the beauty of their country three were specially gifted—De Wint, Copley Fielding, and David Cox.

Mr. Walter Armstrong, in his memoir of De Wint, has pointed out that most of the English branch of the modern landscape school were born between 1780 and 1790. This, of course, excludes the greatest names of all—those of Gainsborough, Turner, Girtin, Constable, and Crome, but it includes Cotman, Cox, Collins, John Varley, Prout, De Wint, Havell, and Copley Fielding. All of these were, therefore, young men together. This band of youths began the practice of water-colour painting when it was yet in its infancy, and lived to see it develop to its prime; nearly all of them had a conspicuous share in its development. Though they started as it were from the same point, so that there is a great similarity in their earliest drawings, each gradually drew away into a path of his own, found new subjects suited to his own individuality, found also a method of ex-

pression to a great extent personal to himself. They do not stand on quite the same level as Turner and Constable; they had not the all-embracing genius of the former, the immense initiatory force of the latter, but they were all distinct powers, pioneers in untrodden lands of art, revealers of beauty unrealised before by painter's pencil, adding each his modest but perceptible quota not only to the domain of art, but also to its resources of expression. Indeed, they did so much in perfecting the *technique* of water-colour and in increasing its range of subject, and did it in so sincere and thorough a manner, that their work is, and must ever remain, in a sense, classic.

Of these men many have already been treated in these pages. Of those that remain the greatest are De Wint, Fielding, and Cox, and their special distinction is that they were, more exclusively than the rest, painters of English country; not so much of its castles and cathedrals, as of its fields and mountains and local

characteristics. They all of them painted in various parts of England, but of this vast book each had a chapter to which he devoted himself more particularly. As Suffolk to Gainsborough, as Norfolk to Crome, and as Essex to Constable, so were Lincolnshire to De Wint, Sussex to Copley Fielding, and Wales to David Cox. Wherever they drew, these men were accomplished artists, but each found some neighbourhood specially congenial to his disposition, where his study was more prolonged and fruitful, calling forth his best both of sympathy and invention. All these men were obliged to earn their livelihood by teaching as well as painting, and counted their pupils by the score. Their influence is not dead yet. Despite the dominance of new ideas, the search for new subjects, you cannot visit an exhibition of water-colour drawings in which half at least of the landscapes do not show distinctly the influence of Cox, or De Wint, or Copley Fielding.

The father of Peter De Wint (1784–1849)

was a physician, descended from a Dutch family which had settled in America. Peter was apprenticed to John Raphael Smith, who has been already mentioned in connexion with Turner and Girtin. De Wint was bound to him for the purpose of learning the arts of engraving and portrait-painting, but he seems to have had a preference for sketching from Nature, and Smith, though he sent him to prison once for refusing to betray the secrets of his fellow-apprentice who had run away, seems to have had the wisdom and kindness to encourage his natural gift. His fellow-apprentice was William Hilton, the historical painter, with whom De Wint formed a friendship which lasted till Hilton's death. They lived together as bachelors, they spent their holidays together at Hilton's home at Lincoln, and there De Wint met and won for his wife the sister of his friend. At Lincoln, also, and in its neighbourhood, he found subjects for endless pictures. Wherever he went, whether to the hilly country

of Yorkshire, Cumberland, or Wales, or the flats of Lincolnshire or Essex (and scarcely Turner himself had in England a wider sketching-ground), he preferred a long, low stretch of country, and to paint it on a long, low slip of paper. It would seem as though he had inherited a love of flatness from his Dutch progenitors. In the foreground a river or a cornfield, or both, a village or town in middle distance, a hill beyond rising to no great height —of such simple elements his finest works are composed. And these works were truly fine, though inspired with no exalted poetry, and confined to the representation of ordinary phenomena. Simplicity, directness, and force, were the essential qualities of his art. His distribution of light and dark was broad and effective, his skies luminous and true, sometimes clear and blue, sometimes hazy with sunny mist, sometimes obscured by drifting rain-clouds. He was a careful student of trees, and in his sketches their exact character was often caught

and put in at once with a felicitous blot—as, for instance, the pines in a rapid sketch of Greenwich Park in the British Museum—and he was masterly in his generalisation of masses of foliage; but for all this his nearer trees are often so mannered in touch that they alone would be sufficient to authenticate a drawing. Few have excelled him in painting the earth, in the solid modelling of the ground, and in representing the different textures of its soil: few have painted mellow sunlight more strongly and transparently than he. The general sentiment of his work is tranquillity, the true country feeling 'far from the madding crowd,' where reapers rest in the cornfield in the shade of fresh-cut sheaves, where barges float slowly on smooth rivers, and cows pasture in fat meadows beside some sleepy town. As Mr. Armstrong says, 'His place in English art is with Constable and David Cox,' though he had none of Constable's desire to make 'the restlessness of Nature shine through the repose of art.' He

was also like and unlike Constable as a colourist; like him in aiming at Nature's exact scale, but seeking her richer and more complete harmonies. His supreme quality was, indeed, his colour; his chord was richer and deeper, perhaps, than that of any other landscape-painter. He drew and finished in colour only—drew in complete and full colour at once—so that his merest sketches have all the force, sometimes more than the force, of his finished drawings. But of his practice we have an authentic account in Mr. Armstrong's memoirs, which perhaps he will forgive me for quoting here:—

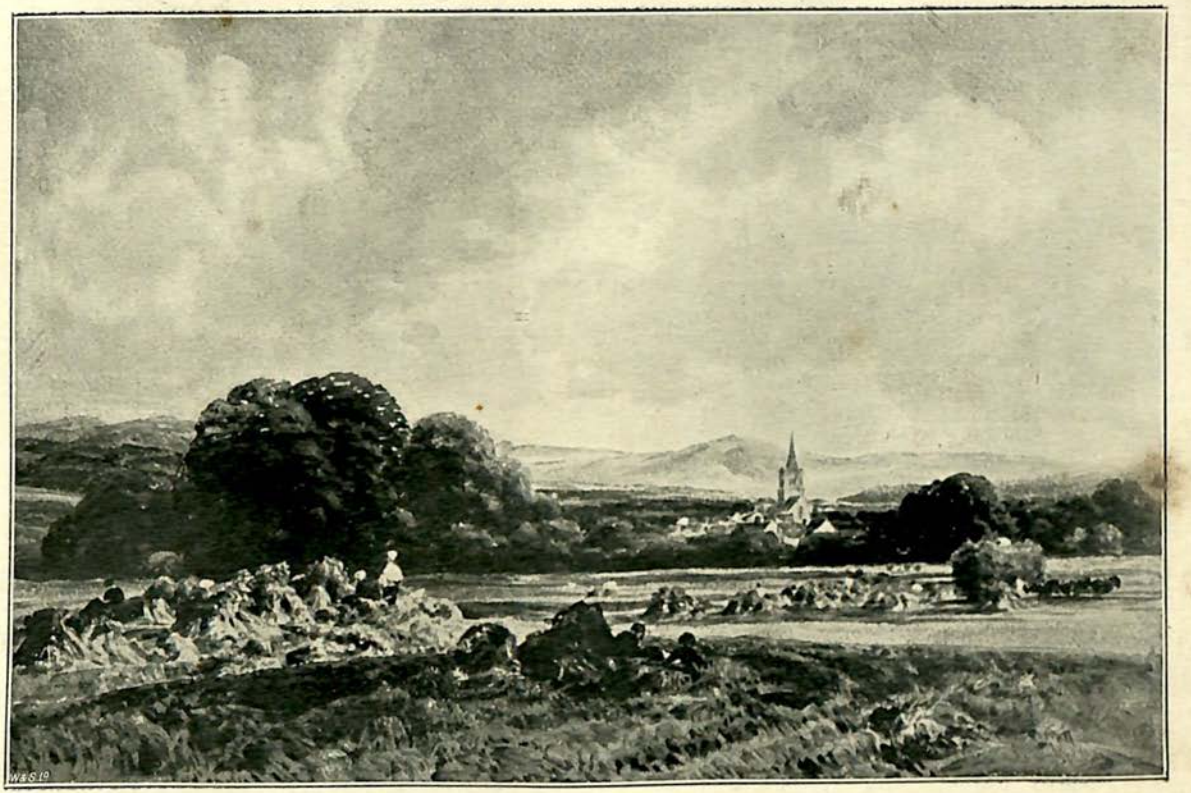
'When painting on his own account he worked almost invariably on "old Creswick paper," which was manufactured in delicate ivory tints. This was always more or less granular in texture, which thoroughly suited his style, for it enabled him to strike his rich transparent tones well into the body of the paper. This he did by saturating it, and while it was wet mosaicing it, as it were, with rich, harmonious colours, some cool, some warm and glowing. His aim was always to succeed by the first intention. The bloom of his colour was never disturbed in the shadows, "lifted" tints being confined to the half-tones and used only in his large works. His sketches and small drawings were carried out entirely in undisturbed colour.

There is a fine instance of this 'mosaicing' in a singularly rich sketch of Gloucester, in the British Museum, and in this and other unfinished works there, notably a grand *ébauche* of a forest scene, his method of commencing his work may be profitably studied, especially his wonderful skill in utilising the grain of the paper to produce variety of texture and innumerable lights.

Fortunately the nation is rich in fine examples of De Wint. At the British Museum there are only a few sketches, but the South Kensington Museum contains twenty-eight of his drawings, including the famous *Cricketers* (now, alas! with a perished sky) and fine pictures of *Nottingham* and *Walton-on-Thames*, all three of which are part of the Ellison Gift; and at the National Gallery [1] are twenty-three drawings bequeathed by Mr. Henderson, all finely preserved, and including some of his finest works, such as *Lincoln Cathedral*, *Bray on the Thames*, *Ruins*

[1] Now on loan to South Kensington Museum.

of Lincoln Castle, and *Harvest Time, Lancashire.* Our reproduction of a *Cornfield, Ivinghoe, Bucks*, is taken from a drawing in this collection. But at South Kensington there are, besides the water-colours, four of his pictures in oil-colour, including his two masterpieces in this medium, the *Cornfield* and the *Woody Landscape*, two of the finest pictures of the English school. They were presented by the late Mrs. Tatlock, the daughter of the painter. Like Cox and other water-colourists, he was as great as a painter in oils as in water-colours, and it is one of the most extraordinary instances of prejudice on the part of both artists and the public that this fact was not recognised till long after his death. He never left off painting in oil, but his pictures were either rejected or skied at the Academy, and always remained on his hands unsold. 'Fifty years ago,' as Mr. Armstrong tells us, 'that august body (the Royal Academy) was not kind to water-colour men who dabbled in oil. It either wished to hold them to their



A Cornfield, Ivinghoe. *By Peter De Wint.*

lasts, or, failing to understand their works, took for granted they were bad.' More extraordinary is what follows:—'In the first instance Mrs. Tatlock made her offer to the National Gallery. At that time the late Sir William Boxall was director. He, perhaps, had never heard of De Wint as a painter in oil. In any case, he was so little attracted by the lady's proposal that he never even tried to see the pictures, and so Constable's *Cornfield*, and *Hay-wain*, and *Valley Farm*, are left without two of the best companions they could find in Europe.'

XI.

COPLEY FIELDING, DAVID COX, W. J. MÜLLER.

OF the three artists referred to in the last chapter as more exclusively than the rest of the earlier English water-colourists, painters of 'the country,' Antony Vandyke Copley Fielding (1787–1855) was at once the most elegant and the weakest, the most charming draughtsman and the least potent colourist. His drawings fell generally under one of three classes: (1) lake and mountain scenery in the North of England, Wales, and Scotland; (2) sea and shore scenes; and (3) pictures of the Sussex Downs. He was particularly skilful in obtaining most delicate gradations of tone and effects of mist by repeated layers of colour and washings down, and may be said to have been

the chief master of this method as distinguished from that of the pure, bright touches in gemlike mosaic, and the artful wedging and interlacing of washes of full strength laid on once and for all, in which both Cox and De Wint excelled. Of Fielding, Mr. Ruskin said in one of his lectures at Oxford :—

'The depth of far-distant brightness, freshness, and mystery of morning air with which Copley Fielding used to invest the ridges of the South Downs, as they rose out of the blue Sussex champaign, remains, and I believe must remain, insuperable, while his sense of beauty in the cloud-forms associated with the higher mountains enabled him to invest the comparatively modest scenery of our own island—out of which he never travelled—with a charm seldom attained by the most ambitious painters of Alp or Apennine.'

The charm of his pictures of lake scenery is doubtless great; he drew the forms of hill and mountain with singular grace, he shrouded them in the most subtle and impalpable veils of mist; but it was their picturesque beauty rather than their majesty that he felt, and his colour was pretty rather than rich or full. But on the

Sussex Downs he was, as Mr. Ruskin says, insuperable. He loved all that was sweet and delicate in Nature, and these softly moulded hills, half-filled with the white mists of morning, or flooded with the gentle gold of a summer afternoon, with their long, smooth curves undulating to the distant white cliff set in tender contrast against a pale blue sky or sandy sea; such things as these pleased him to paint, and were specially suited to his method of execution. The key in which these Down drawings are executed is so light, and their beauty is so difficult to represent by black-and-white lines, that they do not lend themselves to reproduction by photography or etching, and one of his fine drawings of a storm at sea has, therefore, been chosen to represent him in this book. Drawings of this class were scarcely less a specialty of Fielding than his scenes on the Downs, and both have provoked numberless imitations. For such pictures the scale of colour of which he had the completest command was

A Ship in Distress. *By Copley Fielding.*

adequate. The murky sky of all imaginable gradations of warm and cold greys, the waves with slatey hollows and sandy lights, the dark hulls of the ships with their white or brown sails, he repeated with variations again and again. The drawing reproduced is a fine example of his swinging seas and advancing clouds; it has lost in colour, but this does not much affect our engraving. Fielding, like Hunt, was a pupil of John Varley and a visitor at Dr. Monro's. Of his life there is little recorded beyond his connexion with the Water-Colour Society. This commenced in 1810 and terminated only with his death in 1835. During that period he was a prolific contributor to its exhibitions, sending an average of between forty and fifty drawings for many years in succession, and he filled the offices of Treasurer, Secretary, and finally of President of the Society.

The last and greatest of the trio was David Cox, not greatest in all respects, for Copley Fielding had a finer sense of the beauty of line

and form, and De Wint excelled him in composition and drawing and in depth and bloom of colour; but if Cox's chord of colour was not so deep as that of De Wint (Fielding cannot compare with either as a colourist), it was equally fine in quality, as true in harmony, and more radiant. Indeed, as a 'luminarist,' to take a word from the French, there is perhaps no modern painter who is quite his equal. His best pictures, whether in oil or water, make 'a hole in the wall,' as the saying is. Every part of them is alive with light—light radiating from the sky, sparkling in the middle distance, and scintillating even in the shadows of the foreground. And he combined this transparency with remarkable force and solidity of effect, so that his works are as strong as they are bright. Using a full brush, he laid on his colours with swift strokes, interlacing and interweaving them without disturbance, so that (especially on the coarse-grained paper that he loved) they have at once a purity and a play which is perhaps

unrivalled, for they are never muddled or 'smoky,' and, despite their constant variety and interchange, maintain unbroken the prevailing tint of their broadly divided masses. He was also great in rendering every variety of 'weather,' from a bright summer morn with a 'mackerel sky' to a drizzling afternoon and a 'dirty' night. But it is not to his technical skill—splendid though it was, and in so marked a degree peculiar to himself—that he owes his special eminence in the history of English art, but to that power of poetical expression which was more strongly developed in his later life. The spirit of his poetry was of the kind that I have already described as separating modern from ancient landscape, as modern from ancient verse, and consists in imaginative sympathy between human and inanimate nature generally, and more especially between those who win their bread by the sweat of their brows and the places where they live and die. The individual may be a peasant and his place a fen, or he may be

a sailor and his place the shore and the sea, but in either case the man is bound to the place; and its soil and its plants, its heights or its plains, its dryness or its wetness, its stillness or its storms, its prevalent sunshine or prevalent mist, mould his fortunes and his ideas, and even his physical form. These ideas are not fanciful, but most literally true, and yet they present for the imagination of a landscape-painter a field as wide and deep and noble, and perhaps more fit, than the fall of empires and the destinies of the human race.

David Cox (1783–1859), like so many of our greatest artists, was of humble origin. His father was a blacksmith and a whitesmith, his mother, the daughter of a farmer and miller, was of better education than her husband, and a woman of superior intelligence and force of character. David was born in Heath Mill Lane at Deritend, a suburb of Birmingham, on the 29th of April, 1783. What education he received was at a day-school and afterwards at the

Free School at Birmingham for a short time, but he was soon set to work in his father's smithy. He showed very early a disposition towards art, and as he was not deemed strong enough for smith's work, he was sent to the drawing-school of Joseph Barber, for the purpose of qualifying him for apprenticeship to one of the 'toy trades,' then flourishing at Birmingham: the toys consisting of buttons, buckles, snuffboxes, lockets, &c., mounted in metal-work and painted. At the age of fifteen he was apprenticed to a locket and miniature painter, but his master, whose name was Fielder, committed suicide about eighteen months after. That way of life thus closed to him, he found another in grinding colours for the scene-painter at the Birmingham Theatre, of which Macready (the father of the great tragedian) was then lessee and manager. He soon rose to the position of scene-painter, but after two or three years he quarrelled with Macready and went to London, on the proposal of Mr. Astley. He settled near

Astley's Circus, in lodgings kept by a widow named Ragg, whose daughter Mary he afterwards married. He never, however, seems to have painted for Astley's, but he painted scenes for the Surrey and other theatres. Some scenes painted for the theatre at Wolverhampton are his latest recorded connexion with stage-art. He had always kept up his habit of sketching from Nature whenever he could, and by this time his career as a painter of landscape in water-colours may be said to have well commenced. Two of his friends from Birmingham, Charles Barker and Richard Evans, had come up to town to sketch with him, and he disposed of his drawings to a dealer named Simpson, of Greek Street, for the large sum of two guineas a dozen. He began to take pupils, and also lessons; and in 1805 and 1806 he had made sketching tours in North Wales. John Varley was his master, and to his credit be it recorded that when he found that Cox was a poor and struggling artist he refused to accept further payments from him.

In 1808 he married Mary Ragg, who was some twelve years older than he, and removed to a cottage at the corner of Dulwich Common, where their only child, David, who afterwards became a well-known member of the Water-Colour Society, was born the year after. For many years his life was one of struggles; the prices for his drawings (1811–1814) ranging from seven shillings for a small sketch to six pounds for a large coloured drawing. That he could not sell all he painted is clear from the following story. Cox belonged to the short-lived Association of Artists in Water-Colours, which was started in 1808 and came to an end a year or two afterwards, the works of the Association being seized by the owners of the Exhibition Gallery. One of these works, a drawing of *Windsor Castle* by Cox, was purchased by Mr. J. Allnut, and when his collection was being prepared for sale in 1861 two other drawings were found underneath it attached to the sketching-board. The fine drawing of the *Cricketers* by De Wint

was discovered in much the same way by Mr. Vokins.

In 1813 Cox for a short time taught drawing at the Military Academy at Farnham, but his new duties obliged him to break up his home, and were otherwise uncongenial, and in the following year he took up his residence at Hereford, where he remained till 1827, teaching in different schools and private families and taking pupil-boarders. By dint of hard work and economy he had managed by 1817 to build a house on land of his own, which he called Ashtree House, and when he came to London he was able to dispose of it for about £1,000. In 1813 he joined the Water-Colour Society, and during his stay in Hereford he (except in 1815 and 1817) contributed regularly to its exhibitions, sometimes sending over twenty, and once over thirty, drawings. Every year he paid a visit to London and took a sketching holiday. In 1819 he went to North Devon and Bath, in 1826 to Holland and Belgium, but he usually then and

afterwards went to North Wales. In this Hereford time he also published several educational works, illustrated by soft ground etchings of his own and coloured aquatints. In 1814 the first appeared called 'A Treatise on Landscape Painting and Effect on Water-Colours, from the first rudiments to the finished picture;' in 1816, 'Progressive Lessons in Landscape for Young Beginners'—twenty-four etchings without letterpress; and in 1825 his 'Young Artists' Companion, or Drawing-book of Studies,' &c. He also published in 1820 some views of Bath.

From 1827 to 1841 Cox lived at 9, Foxley Road, Kennington Common, and during these years took several short trips to France, and sketching excursions in Derbyshire, Lancashire, Yorkshire, Somersetshire, and Wales. In 1836 and 1837 he made the sketches for his illustrations to Roscoe's 'Wanderings and Excursions' in North and South Wales. Living a simple painter's life without incident, steadily but slowly improving in his art and in public favour, he

saved a little money year by year, and produced hundreds of drawings which sold for small prices, and probably did not deserve very large ones.

In 1839 Cox was fifty-six years old, a good honest painter in water-colours, an accurate observer of Nature, an excellent teacher, but yet not generally recognised as the possessor of any special gift or remarkable poetry of feeling. But he was still an industrious and humble man, not tired of his work nor satisfied with his accomplishments, but conscious of his shortcomings, and bent on overcoming them if it were possible. At this time he conceived a strong desire to paint in oils, and not even his habitual caution or the advice of most of his friends could dissuade him from the attempt. He had long ago sketched from Nature in oils with Havell, but he had not painted any oil picture of importance. He had, at least, one encourager in his new departure, a friend and fellow-sketcher, Mr. William Roberts; and he persevered, with the result of not only

mastering the difficulties of oil-painting, but also thereby greatly developing his genius as a painter in water-colours. This development was assisted by the influence of a much younger man, whose rapidity and skill in the management of his materials were phenomenal. In 1839 this young painter (but twenty-seven years old, and equally skilful in oil and water-colours) had just returned from his journeys in Greece and Egypt, bringing with him his portfolios full of vigorous and masterly sketches, and Cox went to see him paint.

This young genius was William John Müller, the son of a German minister, born at Bristol, where his father was Curator of the Museum. Well educated, endowed with various tastes, and intended for an engineer, he threw over everything for art. He received his first instruction from his fellow-townsman, James Baker Pyne (1800–1870), the well-known landscape-painter and imitator of Turner, but soon struck out a bold new line for himself, studying direct from

Nature, and painting in the open air. He began to exhibit at the Royal Academy in 1833, and had visited Germany, Switzerland, and Italy, besides Greece and Egypt, before one morning Mr. George Fripp, now himself a distinguished veteran of the water-colour school, took Cox to see him paint. One of the pictures which he painted in Cox's presence was the famous *Ammunition Waggon*, which he completed in two sittings of a few hours each, although he made a very serious change in the composition while the picture was in progress. Cox looked on with wonder at the dexterity and power of the young genius, and with the eager apprehension of a young student. On the conclusion of one of the sittings, or lessons, he is reported to have said, in all humility, 'You see, Mr. Müller, *I can't paint*,' or words to that effect. But if he never painted before he painted afterwards, basing his practice in oils upon Müller's, and exhibiting a freedom and power in his water-colours greater than before.

Cox must, therefore, be said to have learnt much from Müller, of whose splendid audacity as a sketcher two examples are here given, reduced in size and denuded of colour, but still illustrative of some of his best qualities as a draughtsman and chiaroscurist. To him it will be necessary to recur again, if briefly, for though he can scarcely be called one of the earlier water-colourists, he, like Bonington, did not live to belong to the later ones, and his talents were too sterling and his influence too great for him to be dismissed as an incident in the life of David Cox. At the same time it would be easy to over-estimate his influence on Cox. Cox was Cox even in 1838; all that he had of knowledge, of nature, of poetical feeling was stored up in the man, and ripe. In the higher qualities of Cox, especially his human sympathy, Müller, with all his strength, was deficient; what Cox owed to him was not feeling but a method of expressing it. How quickly he profited by his study of oil-painting may be gathered from the fact that one

of his oil-pictures, *Washing Day*, painted in 1843, sold at Christie's in 1872 for £945, and many of his later oil pictures have sold for prices between two and three thousand pounds; and one, quite a small picture, *Peace and War*, for £3,601 10s., a price quite unexampled for any landscape of the same size. It is only 18½ inches by 24 inches. It was painted in 1846, and given by Cox to a friend. This friend being in need of money, Cox bought his own picture of him for £20, and afterwards sold it for the same sum.

The desire to perfect himself in oil-painting was one of the reasons for his leaving London in 1841, when he retired to the neighbourhood of his native place. It was at Greenfield House, Greenfield Lane, Harborne, near Birmingham, that he lived from that year till his death in 1859. It is to this period that all his great oil-pictures, and the noblest and most poetical of his water-colour drawings belong; including probably the not very large but fine example in the British Museum which has been engraved for this book.

The inspiration for most of these was drawn mainly from North Wales, especially from Bettws-y-Coed and its neighbourhood, to which he paid a yearly visit from 1844 to 1856. Of all the parts of this island which he visited and painted, it was Wales that he loved and understood best; it was Wales that drew from him his deeper notes of poetry, his noblest sympathy with his kind. He is the greatest interpreter of her scenery and her life. And of all places in Wales, it is Bettws-y-Coed that he selected especially as the field for the exercise of his art. It was there that he sketched the church, the mill, the 'big' meadow, and saw the touching scene which he afterwards wrought into his noble drawing of *The Welsh Funeral;* and it was in its neighbourhood that he watched the peasants gathering peat, or returning home laden with fragrant heather, both subjects of famous drawings; and it was there probably that he saw the old man in a fine drawing in the British Museum returning at eve with the bundle of faggots on his back.

It was there, in fact, that all his greatest works were conceived—oil-pictures and water-colours—whose names are now 'historical' in sale-rooms for the large prices they have fetched since his death; especially at the Quilter sale in 1875, when the great *Hayfield* sold for £2,950, the largest price ever paid for a water-colour drawing, not even excepting Turner's.

But even when he had reached the zenith of his power, as the story just related of the picture of *Peace and War* will indicate, his prices were still low, his genius only recognised by a few. One of his oil-pictures was actually rejected by the British Institution in 1844; and he had to complain of the small respect that was paid by the hangers to the drawings he sent to the Water-Colour Society in 1845. The public and his brother artists saw only in his broad style a 'want of finish.' In 1853, when his power was at his highest, when his grasp of the greater truths of Nature was most strong, when his colour was most deep and brilliant and pure, and his

COAST NEAR PEN MAEN MAWR. *By David Cox.*

works were inspired by a large spirit of humanity and a solemn deep feeling which may almost be called biblical, the Committee of the Water-Colour Society thought his drawing, 'too rough!' 'They forget,' wrote Cox, with a self-assertion rare to his humble nature, 'that they are the work of the mind, which I consider very far before portraits of places.' This (1853) was the year of *The Challenge*—a drawing of a bull roaring, a wild swamp with a blurred sky behind it—and the *Summit of a Mountain*, two of the finest of his later works. The former was, however, hung in the place of honour; and the latter found admirers at Harborne, for Cox wrote to his son, 'Perhaps I am made vain by some here who think my *Summit of a Mountain* worth—I am almost afraid to say—£100; and if I could paint it in oil I shall some day, with D.V., get that sum.' There is no record that he ever did get 'that sum' for any one of his works; but if he did it was probably his 'top price.' A good deal of pity has been expressed for him (as for other

artists) on account of the enormous contrast between the sums paid for their works after their death and the prices they obtained in their lives; and there are few lives more pathetic than those of great artists like J. F. Millet and Méryon, who were barely able to support themselves in the humblest fashion even to the last. But this was not the case with Cox, though he had his period of struggle; and it was well said by Mr. Edward Radcliffe, in a speech delivered at a dinner given by the Liverpool Art Club in 1875 to commemorate an exhibition of Cox's works:—

'I would not like his life to have been changed one bit. . . . No man more thoroughly enjoyed his life. His habits and tastes were of the most simple kind. He saved what to him was a large competency. His house with all its surroundings was a model of English comfort. Suppose he had been besieged by patrons and dealers, he might have launched out . . . kept his carriage, taken his '40 port, and died twenty years before he did; and instead of being remembered by troops of friends as a dear simple friend, only thought of as a great "Mogul."'

It would be well, perhaps, for the art of

England, and for many fashionable artists of the present day, if they were compelled by comparative neglect to live in such comparative poverty as David Cox. Fortunately he was never tempted to flood the market with inferior replicas of the *Vale of Clwyd* and the *Skylark*, but put new effort and thought into every sketch till the end.

In 1844 Cox had a bad chest attack, and in the same year he lost his wife, after a union of thirty-seven years, and felt her loss severely. She was a very intelligent woman, had helped greatly in the strict economy of the household, and had taken an unusual interest in her husband's work. She sat with him while he painted, and was an admirable and severe critic. Cox's deep religious convictions aided him in recovering from this blow. In December he wrote to his son and daughter-in-law: 'I certainly was very much out of spirits when I wrote on Thursday, but I am much better now; and I believe I have no real cause to be otherwise, for all things, I feel, are

ordained for the very best for my good. I have been at my work with more calmness, and shall, I have no doubt, do better and be better in all ways, with God's grace and assistance. Your letter was of a most encouraging kind, too, with regard to my work, and yesterday I took your advice and immediately took up a canvas to begin an "oil" for the Institution.' This picture was called *Wind, Rain, and Sunshine* (or *Sun, Wind, and Rain*), a title suggested by Turner's *Rain, Steam, and Speed*, exhibited the previous year (1844). Work once begun again, his industry never failed. He worked not only by day, but in the evening also, and his testimony as to the value of painting by lamplight is interesting. He wrote to his son in 1849: 'In an evening I go to oil-painting (small pictures). I wish I could finish them by lamplight as well as I can make a beginning; for I find when I paint in oil and water-colours by lamplight, my picture is always broader in effect and more brilliant, and often better and more pure, in the colour of the tints.'

LANDSCAPE. *By J. D. Harding.*

In 1853 Cox had a seizure which, if not paralytic, had much the same effect. His eyesight was affected and one lid drooped; but he went on painting, and his drawings of 1857, though rougher than ever, made a great impression on the public. In June he was taken ill, and though he recovered sufficiently to enjoy painting again, and exhibited drawings in 1858 and 1859, he did not leave Harborne any more, and died there on the 7th of June, 1859.

I have entered more fully than usual into the life of this artist, partly because he was one of the greatest of his school, and partly because it is rare to find such a good record of a water-colour artist's life as is contained in the biographies of Cox by his friend Hall and by Solly, the latter of which was based on the manuscript of the former, but was the earlier in point of publication. I have also quoted very freely from the account of Cox's life, which I contributed to the 'Dictionary of National Biography.'

Of the other illustrations to this chapter, one is from a sepia drawing by James Duffield Harding (1798–1863), an artist of much grace and skill, a celebrated teacher in his day, and principally remarkable for his skill in the use of the lead-pencil and his works of instruction on the subject, especially on the drawing of foliage of various kinds of trees.

The other is from a water-colour drawing by George Chambers, who in the course of his short life of thirty-seven years (1803–1840) was by turns sailor, house-painter, panorama-painter, scene-painter, and finally painter of battle-pieces and marine subjects. He is not perhaps as well known as he should be, but has yet attained a secure and honourable place among English painters, for the truth, the vigour, and the fine colour of his works. Two of his most important pictures, *The Bombardment of Algiers in* 1816 and *The Capture of Portobello*, are in the collection of marine pictures at Greenwich. The drawing here engraved is at the South Ken-

A Windy Day. *By G. Chambers.*

sington Museum, and is an excellent example of his skill in water-colours and fresh observation of Nature. The scene is evidently Dutch, possibly on the Zuider Zee, and is full of the movement of air and water and the light from a broken sky.

XII.

TURNER AGAIN.

TURNER'S advice was to paint your 'impressions,' but he meant by impressions something very different from the impressions of the modern impressionists. He did not paint his impressions at once, but reserved them sometimes for years; they dwelt and germinated in his mind until they had developed into a pictured fancy, which expressed the effect upon his mind of a particular scene, or series of scenes — the pictorial sum total of many 'impressions,' sensual and mental. His painted impressions were, therefore, highly organised poems, of which the material was indeed supplied by Nature, but was so altered and rearranged in the process of composition, that

the results were creations of which he was as much the author as Shelley of his 'Ode to the Skylark,' or Beethoven of the Pastoral Sonata. Müller, on the contrary, painted his impressions in a manner much more like the artists of the school of Manet and Degas. The impressions he painted were the impressions of the eye and of the moment. He painted them at once in a sketch, and when he made a picture of the sketch, he strove to preserve its freshness unimpaired, either by elaboration or added sentiment. This apart from all extremes of impressionism is one of the characteristics of modern art—of the art of men who have lived since Müller. It was not quite such a characteristic of the art of his time, and therefore Müller may be said to have been in a measure an innovator, an introducer of a new spirit among painters, or at least among water-colourists; and it is for this reason partly that I have said more about him than about some earlier men. Another reason is that he was

one of the first of English artists to visit the East in a purely painter-like spirit, and to bring back 'impressions' of it which were perfectly fresh and natural records of what he saw and had pleasure in seeing. His sketches in Egypt and Asia Minor are still as unequalled in force and brilliance of record and in the purity of their Eastern character, as they are in sheer sketching strength. Fortunately the bequest of Mr. Henderson's fine collection enables the visitor to the British Museum to study many of his finest sketches of this kind; and while he turns over the pages of masterly drawing and flashing colour he will be reminded of no English artist who lived before him. But at the same time, though he acknowledges their confident skill and their splendid colouring which, especially in some interiors with figures, will remind him of Titian or Rembrandt and sometimes both together, he may miss some indefinable quality which is necessary to his full appreciation of a work of art, though it be only

a sketch, a want of human interest perhaps, a sentiment, or more vaguely 'poetry.'

Of that kind, or those kinds, of poetry which we find in other English landscape work, the balanced serenity of Cozens, the scenic loveliness of Barret, the solemn humanity of David Cox (to mention no more), we shall find indeed little. Such poetry is scarcely to be expected in the sketches of a young man, especially in a strange country; but you will find little of it even in his more finished pictures either abroad or at home. But of the mystery and romance of dead homes of ancient civilisations, and of another kind of poetry, the poetry of first sight —of the moment—the keen appeal of a new vision, keenly responded to—of these kinds of poetry there is plenty in these sketches. On the subject of Müller's 'poetry' it will, however, be best to let his biographer speak, in a passage which tells us something of his practice also:—

'Müller knew well that a sketch ought not to be a finished work, but a vivid, true, but generalised impression of

the scene; a sort of compromise, in fact, wherein the soul or spirit of the scene was caught and rapidly made his own; in his later sketches of English country scenes, especially those of the scenery near Bristol, which he loved so well, this *poetical* rendering of the subject is very striking. When about to make a sketch from nature, Müller took a careful survey of all that was *around* as well as before him. He then made his selection; but his art-knowledge and his imagination enabled him to see mentally how the subject would appear if treated by one of the grand old masters, and to that ideal he often worked in his finest sketches. *How the subject would compose* was always one of the first points which he considered; and in carrying this out he never seems to have lost sight of the leading lines, nor to have neglected the assistance accorded by a very broad and happy arrangement of light and shade.

'Müller looked on the mere imitative process—however important—at the least essential of the rarer artistic qualifications that are necessary to produce a truly fine sketch. And yet the cultivation of the imitative faculty never had been, and never was, neglected by him . . . . In his last journey to Lycia he kept up the good practice of careful pencil-sketching.

'As Müller's career advanced he evidently felt more deeply the poetry which is hidden in nature, and for which he sought an expression, just as he had learned to seize on the salient points of every subject selected by him during the latter years of his life—those points I mean which were best calculated to express its character, sentiment, and feeling. It was thus with broad washes and sweeps of his brush, supplemented by rapid markings and hatchings, that he combined

LANDSCAPE. *By W. J. Müller.*

what appeared to him best in every scene, feeling instinctively, in copying from nature, what objects it was desirable to sacrifice and discard, and what to retain and bring prominently forward. Sometimes—I should, perhaps, say almost always—he had to supply from his imagination what was wanting to carry to completeness the picture which he had already idealised in his mind.'

Müller died in 1845 at the early age of thirty-two, cut off, like Girtin and Bonington, before his genius had reached its full development, but not without making his distinct mark in modern art, or attaining a mastery which has rarely been equalled. Like those of David Cox and De Wint, and many another English landscape artist, his works have risen enormously in estimation since his death, but this has been the case, even perhaps in a more marked degree, with those of James Holland (1800–1879), for Holland attained a much more modest celebrity in his life. Of this rich and tender colourist (great both in oil and water-colour), whose radiant pictures of Venice are among the master-works of the British school, a small illustration is given

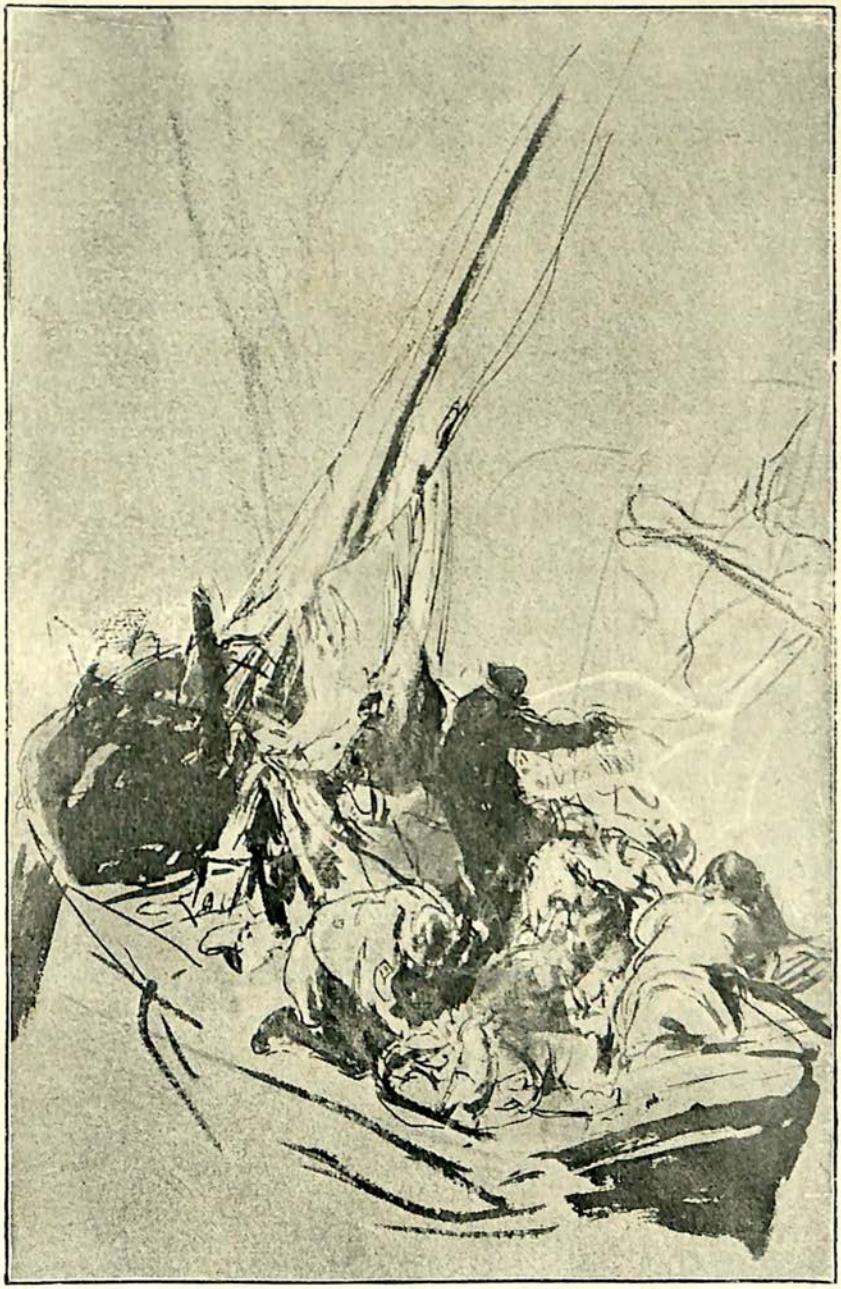
from a drawing at South Kensington, and with this bare mention of him I must close the list of the Earlier English painters in water-colour. As I do so, many names rise up to reproach me: of figure-painters several, especially Richard Westall; of the landscape-painters many more, especially Robson; of painters generally, John Frederick Lewis, whose shade may well complain of the space allotted to Müller. But this book is after all but an essay, without a claim to exhaust its subject, and it will be fitly concluded by a few more words about Turner.

We left him in 1802, the year he was elected Academician, the year of Girtin's death, the year probably of his first visit to the Continent; it may also be said to have been the year of his emancipation as an artist. The magnificent series of large drawings from the North, belonging to the period of 1798–1802, the *Norham*, *Warkworth*, and *Kilchurn Castles*, the *Edinburgh*, and a score of others, and many a fine but

OSPEDALE CIVILE, VENICE. *By J. Holland.*

dark oil-picture besides, were a sudden revelation of the original power and poetry of the artist; but they still, the water-colours at least, bore the traces of Girtin's influence in their breadth and simplicity, while their grave, contemplative, and restful spirit, reminds one now of Girtin and now of Cozens. It was of the latter no doubt he thought most, when he gained his first glimpse of that Alpine mountain-land of which no one else yet except Cozens had truly drawn the form or caught the spirit; and made that wonderful series of sketches about Bonneville, St. Gothard, and the Grand Chartreuse, which, though they are only in chalk on toned paper touched here and there in a few cases with a splash of colour, are yet remarkable amongst all his sketches for their vigour and truth. Reproduced here is a rapid study of a pilot-boat, as masterly as it can well be. Of this Mr. Ruskin wrote in his Catalogue of the Drawings by Turner, exhibited at Marlborough House in 1858, that it was unrivalled: "The figure of

the old sailor throwing the coil of cable is, without exception, the most wonderful piece of energetic action I have ever seen rendered by means so simple, even Tintoret's work not excepted.' This illustration, if it does not deserve such extravagant praise and if it serves no other purpose, will, at least, show how fully equipped as a draughtsman, how full of varied energy and power, he was when he left England for the Continent in 1802. After this, the divergence of Turner from the road followed by all his contemporaries (who were not his imitators) becomes decided and unmistakable. Whether we regard the drawings for the 'Southern Coast,' or the 'Liber Studiorum,' or Whitaker's 'History of Richmondshire,' or the 'England and Wales,' or his innumerable vignettes, or the 'Rivers of France,' or his later drawings of Venice, he stands alone. Of the band of young artists who met together at Dr. Monro's, there is no one who can follow his steps any more. In 1802 he had beaten all his predecessors on their own



SKETCH OF A PILOT BOAT. *By J. M. W. Turner, R.A.*

ground, and was passing on to dare things unattempted yet in oil or water-colour.

And yet in saying that he had beaten them all on their own ground, some reservation should be made, for there is a personality, a distinct, if limited perfection, in the works of Cozens and Girtin, and even of Hearne, which defies in some measure the rivalry of any other artist, no matter with how superior a genius he may be endowed. Turner surpassed, but did not extinguish, his predecessors. Their work may look dwarfed and humble compared with his, as that of Goldsmith, or Collins, or Gray, beside that of greater poets, but it still stands, touched with the special grace of its origin, and safe to find admiration and sympathy from kindred spirits. Turner's genius was vaster, mightier, broader, fed from a hundred affluents, but theirs was of a purer, simpler jet.

And what is true of his predecessors and the colleagues of his youth as compared with Turner, is true also of those who lived and

worked beside him long after 'Poor Tom' was dead; true of David Cox and De Wint, of Constable and Collins, of Müller and Holland. In other words, no comparison is possible, or, at least, useful; for they did not, and could not, aim at the same goal. So far as they were unconscious, they were driven by quite different forces; so far as they were conscious, they had almost opposite conceptions of their missions as artists. How shall we describe the distinction between Turner and nearly all modern landscape-painters? A few years ago it would have been done easily enough; it would have been thought sufficient to say that Turner was an idealist and the rest realists. But many faults have been found with these distinctions, many confusions have arisen from their use. The claim of all artists with any poetical feeling to be called idealists can scarcely be denied; and no idealist whose work is based on Nature, and whose endeavour is to be true, but is a realist also. The difference is more subtle and

hard to grasp; it is in the character of the ideas which the artists aimed to express, the kind of truth that they sought to realise. Turner's ideas were more comprehensive, his truths less obvious, than those of any other landscape artist. Another distinction may be found in the endeavour of the modern school of English landscape to be faithful to local facts, whereas Turner's genius often accepted them only as material for composition. Other artists strove to make their pictures as like as possible to what they saw both in form and colour; Turner altered and rearranged forms to suit his fancy, and habitually used a personal and artificial scheme of colour. In their rendering of light other artists gave the natural proportion of shade, and in opposing earth to sky gave the former its balance of solidity. Turner, on the contrary (and more and more as he grew older), deprived Nature of her darkness and Earth of her weight; so that sky and land became almost equally imponderable and luminous. Other artists endeavoured to simplify

Nature as much as possible, so as to gain in breadth and unity; Turner endeavoured, on the other hand, to express as much of her intricacy as he could, filling every space with suggestions of infinite detail. Turner, almost from the first, was, more than other artists, the painter of the sun, the sky, and the air; and in the end represented all phenomena as a web woven of sunbeams and mists. His chord of colour may be said to have been taken from the sky; and it is in his skies that he comes nearer to positive, as opposed to relative, truth of colour. And as years went on he pitched his key higher and higher, so that his skies, and his earth with them, became lighter and lighter —a harmony of yellow and red and blue, mixed with white and the lightest of greys. He chose the higher end of the colour gamut, and sacrificed everything to keep in tune; and in this he followed not only his taste and feeling but his genius, for he was never so successful when composing in deeper and fuller notes.

He could not get the lower harmonies with the richness and vibration of other artists, like Cox, De Wint, or Müller. He may be called an alto amongst colourists. It might be thought that an artist who began life as a draughtsman with other draughtsmen, and went on till late in life drawing the same scenes in his native country which he and they had drawn in their youth, would at least in such drawings show strong affinity with his colleagues in the school which he helped with them to found; but it was not so. His work, on the contrary, retained a stronger affinity with that of artists like Cozens, Barret, and Bonington, whose subjects were least English; and the contrast between it and that of men like Girtin, Cox, and De Wint, was most strongly marked in the 'England and Wales' series, which, with the exception of one or two comparatively early drawings which were engraved for it, had no community with any previous work by any other artist. Trusting to early sketches for his facts, and to his memories

for his 'impressions,' his imagination composed beautiful visions of the different places in England and Wales the names of which the engravings were to bear. They were drawings of the greatest beauty and full of poetry; they often expressed numerous and noble ideas in just association with the place depicted; they were based on the most profound and intimate knowledge of Nature that any artist ever possessed; but both in the character of the ideas expressed, and in the truths they sought to realise, they were as far asunder as possible from the work of the other artists to whom these chapters have been devoted. A comparison between Turner and his contemporaries after 1802 is disadvantageous to both; for it can scarcely be accomplished without bringing the peculiar defects of one side and the peculiar merits of the other into the strongest possible contrast.

The Newcastle-on-Tyne, by Turner, in the series of the 'Rivers of England,' will show

NEWCASTLE-ON-TYNE. *By J. M. W. Turner, R.A.*

this as well as any other of Turner's drawings —especially if we compare it with Girtin's drawing of the same place, engraved for Walker's 'Itinerant' in the latter years of the eighteenth century, and republished in Miller's 'Turner and Girtin's Picturesque Views, sixty years since,' in 1854. The Girtin drawing was executed probably between 1790 and 1800, and Turner's a year or two before 1824. The chief aim of Girtin's drawing has evidently been fidelity; he gives us the full width of the river with boats and shipping, its sloping banks of no great height, its bridge, and prominent towers and spires, in their proper places and of their right elevation, and the hills rising gently in the far distance. He gives us also the warehouses and quay on the right bank, all somewhat commonplace and uninteresting as pictorial material, and a bit of the crest of the commonplace cliff in the foreground, with a commonplace figure on it; the wind is from the south, blowing soft masses of rain-cloud along the sky, and carrying

the smoke of the factories over the town. At the time it was taken Newcastle was a much less active and a cleaner place than when Turner made his drawing, and he has made his Newcastle much more busy and crowded, and fuller of fumes and smoke. Perhaps never before was the artistic value of smoke so thoroughly felt. It rises from a thousand chimneys, blends with the sky, and shrouds half the town in veils of every variety of tint and opacity. Turner's drawing has an infernal majesty of its own, and as a picture is far finer than Girtin's.

Not that this is of much importance in the comparison, for Girtin could make fine pictures out of smoky towns, as we may see in his *Bridge-north*, and had perhaps taught Turner how to do so; and if he had lived on as Turner did, instead of dying in 1802, he might have produced a still more noble picture of Newcastle than this of Turner's. But it may be safely said that he would not have obtained the same kind of beauty in the same way. How did

Turner do it? By altering nearly every part. One special value of Girtin's drawing as a means of comparison is this—that it is taken from the same, or as nearly as possible the same, point of view as Turner's. Perhaps the two artists, when youths, drew the town together sitting side by side on the same knoll; perhaps —and I think this is more likely—Turner used Girtin's sketch, or the engraving for it, as the basis of his drawing. Turner has filled up a good deal of the river, and hidden part of the shore, with sails and shipping; he has pulled the foreground more into the middle, and has replaced the figure by two, besides introducing others in other places; he has raised the land on both sides of the river to an imposing height; he has raised all the towers and spires enormously, and made a special exaggeration of the shot-tower; he has wiped out the distant hills altogether, and so increased the space for his sky, which is entirely his own. But if we examine the two bit by bit, we shall find

Girtin's drawing constantly, as it were, cropping up beneath Turner's, the smoke following the same direction in the same curves, the same lights and the same forms recurring in the same places throughout, although not representing always the same things. If these coincidences occurred only in the buildings there would be more room for doubt, but they occur in the boats and the figures. However this may be, whether he worked from his own sketch or Girtin's, or both, at least one thing is clear, that Turner's aim was to make as impressive a picture of the place as he could, careless as to the amount of local truth he sacrificed, provided he retained a few prominent features; while the aim of Girtin and his fellows was to preserve as intact as possible the local truth, importing no beauty except of atmospheric effect.

To attempt anything like a complete review of Turner's genius is quite beyond the scope of the present work. He must be studied by

himself, and there is already ample means of doing so with the aid of the collection of the National Gallery and the writings of Mr. Ruskin, Mr. Hamerton, and a hundred other writers. But in a book dealing with the earlier English water-colourists it has been impossible to ignore the greatest of them all. I have therefore endeavoured to restrict my remarks about Turner to those points in his career and achievement in which he is most closely related to those other earlier English water-colourists who were his contemporaries in youth, and who shared with him in the foundation and development of the water-colour art of England. Nearly every one of these artists found a path for himself, distinct indeed, but yet not far from those of his colleagues. Turner alone diverged greatly, and went off at a wide angle to his own special glory.

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